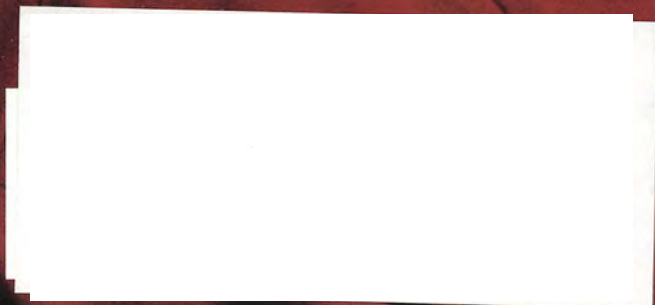


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VOLUME 22, NUMBER 6

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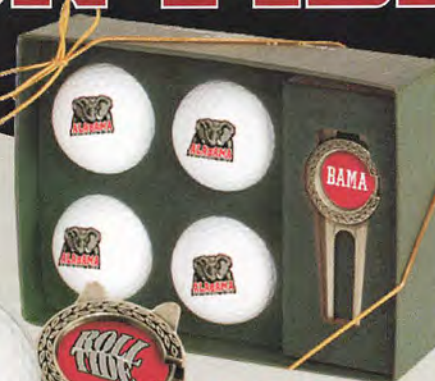




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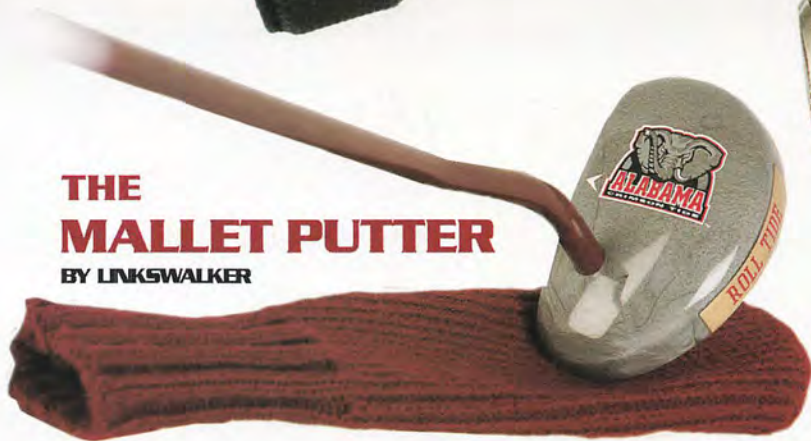
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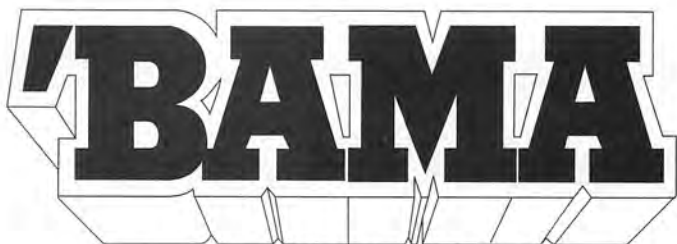
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'BAMA, Inside The Crimson Tide/AUGUST 2000



INSIDE THE CRIMSON TIDE

AUGUST, 2000

VOLUME 22, NUMBER 6

Contents

On The Cover: Charlie Stubbs, Alabama's quarterbacks coach, has a great "problem." He has two quarterbacks who are proven winners in junior Andrew Zow and sophomore Tyler Watts. The two will continue the battle to be number one when Alabama practices resume in early August. See Page 16. Barry Fikes Photo



Page 6



Page 12



Page 14



Page 24

Injury Update: The News Is Almost All Good 6

Injuries are a part of football, which means there is great importance in players recovering from injuries as quickly as possible. As the Tide prepares for practice, it appears most of the wounded are recovered or well on the way to recovery. by J.E. Lisby

Football Notebook: A Season To Anticipate Is Near 9

Most Alabama football players have been on campus for at least several weeks, preparing for the pre-season practices that will set the tone for the 2000 football season. by Kirk McNair

Lannis Baxley: His Success Will Not Be Surprise 12

Lannis Baxley was the starting right tackle in the Orange Bowl because Chris Samuels had been injured. This year Baxley is expected to earn the position. by Jess Nicholas

Gerald Dixon: He Loves The Challenge At Corner 14

Gerald Dixon took over as the starting right cornerback for Alabama midway through his freshman season last year and that was considered a key in the Tide's secondary improvement. He expects to be better this year. by J.E. Lisby

The Quarterbacks: Having Two Is An Advantage 16

There is a quarterbacks competition—not controversy—at Alabama, and everyone considers that to be a good thing. Andrew Zow and Tyler Watts will handle that key position for Bama again this season. by Kirk McNair

New Basketball Coaches: Young, Energetic Recruiters Added 20

Both the men's and women's basketball teams have added new assistant coaches and both Johnny Jones for the men and Brittney Ezell for the women are expected to be top recruiters. by J.E. Lisby

Staff Additions: Tide Sports Have Gains, Losses 23

Baseball, softball and track have new assistant coaches joining their staffs this year. Two of the vacancies came because Bama assistants were chosen for head jobs elsewhere. by Kirk McNair

Late Signees: Here Are More New Crimson Tiders 24

A handful of athletes in several sports have signed with Bama since the last report. by Donna Fromme

Football Prospects: Top Players Have Interest In Bama 26

Although it is several months until the February signing day for football, Alabama is already involved with a number of top prospects across the state and region. Catch up on summer recruiting developments. by James Edwards

The Departments 2000 Football Schedule 10 Scorecard 28

The News Is Almost All Good

by J.E. Lisby

Alabama's injured football players are all mended, or at least close to getting well



With a roster full of returning talent and more on its way in the fall, expectations are once again sky-high at Alabama. But even the most gifted teams can have championship hopes dashed when key players are lost to injury. Thankfully, the early news around Alabama's training room is almost entirely good, as every injured athlete on the current Crimson Tide roster is either fully recovered or expected to get there soon.

The list of Bama injured includes numerous key players. At one time or another over the last several months linebacker Darius Gilbert, linebacker Aries Monroe, safety Tony Dixon, tailback Brandon Miree, defensive end Kindal Moorehead, offensive tackle Lannis Baxley, defensive tackle Kenny Smith, defensive tackle Sam Matthews, offensive tackle Bart Raulston, snapper Bradley Ledbetter, tailback Santonio Beard and linebacker Marvin Constant have all been sidelined with various medical problems. So it's understandable there would be concern in the Bama camp.

As head athletic trainer for the football team, Rodney Brown works daily with the individual athletes on their rehabilitation assignments, and he's happy to report the good news. "Except for a couple of guys who are on track to heal but might not be back until October or so, all the guys should be 'good to go' once fall practice begins," Brown stated. "In fact, most of them are all out there full speed now."

The situation represents months of hard work by athletes and trainers. Tide Head Coach Mike DuBose has noted publicly the efforts of Brown and his staff. "The trainers definitely spend their share of time with the

Alabama Trainer Rodney Brown uses miles and miles of tape in his treatment of Crimson Tide football players. Here Bama wide receiver Antonio Carter gets his wrist wrapped.

Barry Fikes Photo

*BAMA, Inside The Crimson Tide/AUGUST 2000

athletes," Brown said. "It becomes a kind of partnership, and it all has to do with the team concept, which is what Coach DuBose emphasizes. When you've got a trainer working with an athlete, especially in a long-term rehab situation, they do become a team. Our job is advising, developing the program, monitoring, and giving feedback. The athlete's contribution is to come in on time with a work ethic, determined to give the best effort. And we both have the same goal: to get him back out on the field as quickly and safely as possible."

Due to concerns about depth, worries about injuries to various Tide defensive linemen have been foremost. Kenny Smith, the senior star and leader of the unit, tore his ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) against LSU, ending his season in the process. But Smith attacked the challenge of rehabilitation and amazed the Tide trainers with his progress. "I couldn't believe how well Kenny Smith came around and improved with his rehab," Brown said. "I don't know if he was just a naturally good healer or what, but Kenny did unbelievably well." Smith's healing was so rapid that he could have taken part in spring drills, but the coaches held him out to be cautious.

Kindal Moorehead did participate in the first half of spring practice, but a pickup basketball game over spring break led to minor knee surgery to repair some torn cartilage. "Kindal's was 'good to go' in July," Brown said. "He's done everything in the off-season program and will be fine in the fall."

Besides Smith and Moorehead, worries about the other starting defensive tackle slot have focused concern on Kelvis White and Sam Matthews. Each has endured ongoing struggles with 'bum' knees that have limited their effectiveness, but both athletes hope to contribute next fall. "Sam has been released for full activity and he looks good," Brown said. "I'm pleased with how he's done. And Kelvis will be there. His knee still gets sore on him from time to time. He'll have his good days and bad days, depending on how hard he goes. But Kelvis is determined to play his senior year, and he's going to be out there."

Another area of concern because of injuries is among the linebacker corps. Aries Monroe, the Junior

College All-America transfer, had a minor knee scope done following spring drills to repair some old cartilage damage. But Monroe recovered from the minor procedure quickly, and is actually healthier now than when he first arrived on campus. Earlier in the spring, Darius Gilbert broke three bones in his right hand while making a tackle. The projected starter at right outside linebacker was forced to practice with a heavy cast, which he immediately discarded following the last scrimmage. Heading into August, Gilbert is fully healed with the wrist and hand stronger than ever.

Marvin Constant suffered the most publicized injury on the squad, as the Tide middle linebacker collapsed in pain from a devastating knee injury on the final play versus LSU. "I had never seen anything like Marvin's injury," Brown said. "He damaged his ACL, his MCL (medial collateral ligament) and even worse than that, he tore loose his patellar tendon. With a normal ACL injury you can get the athlete started with weight-bearing work within two days, and usually within two weeks they're off

crutches and walking. But the patellar tendon connects the quadriceps muscle to the top of the kneecap and anchors the joint down to the leg bone. We had to shut Marvin's quadriceps down for six weeks to allow the tendon to heal.

"His patellar tendon was ruptured, which meant they had to sew it back together. It just had to be allowed the proper time to heal. That period of non-weight-bearing healing when he wasn't able to use that muscle greatly extended his rehab time. Once we did start letting him use the quad, we had to be very gradual in the amount of resistance and the amount of stress that we put on it. Even after he reached the point where he could start some active motion and lift weights, we had to be very slow in our progression to make sure we didn't tear anything or damage the scar tissue. Getting him back to the point where he could begin doing some intense exercise just took a long time. That's why that injury takes so much longer than just a torn ACL. If he had just torn his ACL, he could go right now."

The severity of Constant's injury makes it

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difficult to accurately predict when he can return to action. Constant himself is understandably anxious to get back and hopes to play in the season opener. But while that possibility exists, the medical staff will only say that they expect him to be back sometime during the season. "You can't say exactly when either Marvin or Santonio (Beard) will be back as far as a week or a game," Brown said. "But they're definitely headed in the right direction. My prediction would be that both will be back fairly early in the season."

With the departure of Shaun Alexander to the NFL, tailback also has been a focus of concern. And the discovery of injuries to Santonio Beard (ACL) and Brandon Miree (broken leg) in April only heightened those worries. But broken legs do heal, and Miree's was no exception. So the highly touted tailback from Cincinnati has been in excellent shape for some time now, participating in all off-season work since late June. For Beard, despite his ACL surgery the

medical news is completely positive—even if the timing was not. Oddly enough, doctors believe Beard damaged his ACL sometime back in high school, but it wasn't discovered until swelling and pain in the joint late in spring drills prompted an MRI, which revealed the tear. At that point the decision was made to go ahead and repair the joint. Beard is doing well in his rehabilitation, but if his recovery follows the normal timetable he won't be back at full speed until mid-October.

It's worth noting that one of the first players to talk to Beard after his surgery was Kenny Smith (he of the accelerated healing cycle). And like Constant, Beard is determined to push forward his projected return date. "You can expect me back by the second game," the speedy tailback said. "I'll be ready to go early in the season."

Four important offensive linemen were also bitten with the injury bug over the off-season, but their ailments couldn't have been more different. Lannis Baxley, expected to step in and handle the

starting job at right tackle, had relatively serious cartilage surgery done after spring. In his case a procedure was done to stimulate cartilage growth in the joint, requiring him to use crutches for several weeks. But the doctors reported success and Baxley should be fine. Against all odds, Bart Raulston, also expected to challenge for playing time at tackle, broke the same bone in both wrists. The pain from two aching joints seriously hindered his effectiveness in the spring, but the medical staff is optimistic that he has successfully rehabilitated both breaks. Hopefully the towering tackle can stay injury-free in the fall and achieve his potential.

Listed second string at guard, Matt Lomax had successfully recovered from knee surgery and a broken hand before injuring his back just prior to spring practice. But he performed well the last week of drills, and all those injuries should be behind him heading into August. Alabama's long-snapper on punts and place-kicks suffered one of the more unusual and potentially damaging off-season injuries. Bradley Ledbetter broke his crucial right (snapping) hand during summer construction work. The break was serious enough that pins had to be surgically inserted to stabilize the bone, but those have now been removed and Ledbetter spent July rehabilitating and strengthening the limb.

Tony Dixon, last season's co-starter at strong safety, was the only defensive back facing an injury recovery during the off-season. A shoulder separation during the season wound up requiring surgery to stabilize the joint. But both surgery and rehabilitation went very well and Dixon participated fully in summer workouts.

Reading the list of various problems one after another, it might appear that Alabama athletes have suffered more than their share of injuries over the last season. But the truth is that except for the multiple medical disaster that was the LSU game, the '99 season was fairly typical. "We do track injuries, the type and number," Brown said. "We had a few more in '99 than some past years, but there have been seasons when we had a lot worse than this. Actually, for most of last season we were really very lucky from an injury standpoint. We didn't have anything real serious until the LSU game. Of course, we lost three guys in that one game.

"But football is a tough sport and injuries do occur. I just hope that list is shorter this year."

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A Season To Anticipate Is Near

by Kirk McNair

Catching up on summer developments at Capstone

Even in the off-season, Alabama football is making news. Followers of the Crimson Tide have watched anxiously for academic news among both incoming and returning players. There have been a few deletions and additions to the squad. And pre-season predictions have given Tide followers reason to be giddy.

Alabama football players were to make their official reports to campus in early August, but *de facto* reporting was in mid-summer for most returning players and a large number of newcomers. Particularly with the beginning of the second semester of summer school on July 10, the pace of and participation in voluntary workouts picked up.

Freshmen and other newcomers were to report officially Sunday, August 6, and have a couple of days of work before returning players report Wednesday, August 9. After physical examinations on August 10, all players invited to pre-season camp (there's a limit of 110 before classes begin) were to begin work in shorts, shoulder pads, and helmets on August 11. The first day in full gear was set for Tuesday, August 15. Players were expected to participate in three practices per day until August 23, when classes and one-a-day practices commence. The next big day on the Bama football calendar is Thursday, August 31, when the Tide will depart Tuscaloosa for California and the Tide's season-opening game against UCLA in the Rose Bowl in Pasadena on Saturday, September 2.

Almost every pre-season publication has proclaimed the 2000 Alabama football team as one capable of competing for the national championship. Prediction of a top five finish is routine and some have picked the Crimson Tide as high as third in the nation. Bama has been selected by virtually every source to successfully defend its Southeastern Conference championship.

Tide players, too, have come in for pre-season honors with wide receiver Freddie Milons (last year's SEC Championship Game Most Valuable Player), linebacker Saleem Rasheed (last year's SEC Freshman Defensive Player of the Year), and center

Paul Hogan (consensus All-SEC as a junior) receiving All-America mention.

Alabama Head Coach Mike DuBose has said that he knows every team on Alabama's schedule aims for the Crimson Tide. With pre-season expectations so high for Bama, DuBose knows those opponents will have extra incentive, which means Tide coaches and players have to have "focus."

Bama will not have all of the players who completed spring practice when the Tide begins fall drills. The biggest loss is that of Jeremy Walker. The upcoming sophomore, who saw duty at linebacker and on special teams last year as a true freshman, had moved back to his natural fullback position in the spring and performed very well. However, early in the summer he learned that he had a congenital abnormality in his neck, a condition that resulted in Alabama team doctors recommending Walker end his football career. Walker sought out a second opinion, but it was the same. As a result, Walker's playing career is over. He will remain with the team as a student coach.

In the spring Walker was the back-up fullback to Dustin McClintock as last year's back-up, Marvin Brown, sat out spring practice for disciplinary reasons. Brown has re-joined the team and is expected to return to his spot as back-up to McClintock.

Alabama also lost back-up quarterback Luke Tucker. The brother of former Tide back-up quarterback Lance Tucker, Luke had seen very limited action as a redshirt freshman in 1999 and had not made significant progress in the spring. However, it wasn't football that has taken him off the fall roster. Tucker failed to make necessary progress academically. As a result he has elected to transfer to Beville State Junior College in Fayette and will play baseball there. If he regains his academic status by graduating from junior college, he will be eligible to be re-signed by Alabama.

Also electing to give up football this summer is Joe Yount. An upcoming junior, Yount had seen only limited playing time as a tight end and had been shifted to defense in the spring. He was far down the depth chart and elected to end his playing career.

Although there have been no official re-

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ports, DuBose was reported as saying that there were "a couple of returning seniors" who would not maintain their eligibility because of academic deficiencies, but he did not divulge who they are.

There have also been some gains for the Crimson Tide. One of the most interesting is news that wide receiver Tarry Givens (6-5, 200) of Godby High School in Tallahassee, Florida, is expected to join Bama this fall. Givens had been reported last year as planning to attend junior college. As a result, no university signed the talented star. However, Givens said, "Alabama did not give up on me." That proved to be a good policy, because Givens improved his academic work and earned eligibility this summer. He said that he had received word from the NCAA Clearinghouse that he is eligible and that he will join the Crimson Tide in August drills. As a senior he had 36 pass receptions for 620 yards and eight touchdowns.

Also saying that he had received word of full eligibility was defensive lineman Gerard Clark (6-7, 265), who spent last fall at Milford Prep in Connecticut after first signing with Bama in 1999. The Daytona Beach, Florida, native had 75 tackles and eight sacks for Milford last year.

Not all Bama signees will be joining the Tide, and at least one incoming freshman will not be eligible to play in games, although he will be allowed to practice. Anthony Bryant, the 6-4, 324-pound defensive lineman from Sunshine High School in Newbern, said that he will be a partial qualifier and will enter Alabama, even though he will not be able to play in games until 2001.

It has been widely reported that three signees will not enter The University this fall. Defensive lineman Mac Tyler of Bessemer Jess Lanier and offensive lineman Maurice "Mo" Mitchell of Dougherty High School in Albany, Georgia, are both expected to attend prep school and will be eligible to sign again this winter. (A player who does not graduate from high school can earn his eligibility in prep school, and then is free to sign with any school.) Wide receiver Derrian Walker of Bessemer Jess Lanier is expected to attend junior college.

There have been no reports on the status of a few other signees, who were not on campus at the start of summer school. They are:

Defensive lineman Antwan Odom of Alma Bryant High School in Bayou LaBatre; defensive end Nautyn McKay-Loescher of Toronto, Ontario, in Canada; and linebacker Harold James of Osceola, Arkansas.

Givens is not the only unexpected new member of the Alabama wide receiver corps. Jeremy Taylor, a star member of the Alabama track and field team the past couple of years, will join the football squad as a

2000 Alabama Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Time (TV)*	Site
Sept. 2	UCLA	2:30 (ABC)	Pasadena
Sept. 9	Vanderbilt	11:30 (J-P)	Birmingham
Sept. 16	Southern Mississippi	8:00 (ESPN2)	Birmingham
Sept. 23	Arkansas	8:00 (ESPN2)	Fayetteville
Sept. 30	South Carolina	TBA	Tuscaloosa
Oct. 14	Mississippi	6:00 (ESPN)	Tuscaloosa
Oct. 21	Tennessee	2:30 (CBS)	Knoxville
Oct. 28	Central Florida (HC)	2:00	Tuscaloosa
Nov. 4	LSU	2:30 (CBS)	Baton Rouge
Nov. 11	Mississippi State	TBA	Starkville
Nov. 18	Auburn	2:30 (CBS)	Tuscaloosa
Southeastern Conference Championship Game			
Dec. 2	TBA	7 p.m. (ABC)	Atlanta

*Central time. Some times and television may change.

walk-on. A couple of decades ago a Bama track star, James Mallard, finished his track eligibility, then joined the Tide football team and was one of the team's top receivers, earning a chance at professional play. That is Taylor's plan.

Taylor, 6-2, 195, has proven speed. He qualified for last spring's NCAA championships with a time of 6.68 in the 60-meter dash, 10.28 in the 100-meter dash, and 20.68 in the 200-meter dash. He also had a leap of 25-10 in the long jump. He'll also re-join Jason McAddley, Bama's wide receiver who was a walk-on with the track team last spring and was a member, with Taylor, of the 4x100 relay team that finished fourth in the SEC Championships.

Taylor could not join the Tide football team until after completion of his track eligibility because of a rule that prohibits scholarship athletes in sports other than football from playing football.

Taylor said, "I ran track and did fairly well. But I didn't want to go through life wondering whether I could do this. It's always been in my heart to play football for Alabama." Taylor is a native of Nashville and was a high school teammate of former Bama defensive lineman Reggie Grimes at Hunters Lane High School.

Alabama's tight end corps, also a little short-handed, will have a walk-on addition in David Cavan (6-5, 240), the son of former Tide halfback Pete Cavan. David, who played at American Christian in Northport, turned down a scholarship offer from his uncle, Mike Cavan, who is head coach at SMU, to walk on at Bama.

Although DuBose seemed pleased with the progress made by Bama place-kickers Danny Haynes and Chris Kemp in the spring, it's likely he's happy to know a couple of highly-regarded walk-ons will join the team in August. Already in school this summer and working out have been Neal Thomas, who kicked last year at Hinds Community College in Mississippi, and Michael Ziifle, a

former soccer star who just took up football as a senior last year at Newnan, Georgia.

It seems as if Alabama can't avoid some controversy at all times, and the Tide has had a little of that, too. Since last winter an area of contention among some has been that Alabama's assistant coaches are only in about the middle of the pack among salaries in the SEC. This summer Tide assistant coaches received a 4 per cent pay raise. They had also received a couple of bonus payments for the performance of the Tide during the 1999 season.

Alabama President Dr. Andrew Sorenson said the raises were made possible by higher than expected revenue based on Alabama's participation in the Bowl Championship Series and from SEC revenue sharing. He said that Alabama's athletics budget this year would be a "few hundred thousand dollars higher" than last year. Last year Alabama's athletics budget was \$33.4 million, which was ninth highest in the nation, but only third highest in the SEC (behind Tennessee at \$45 million, Florida at \$41.4 million and Kentucky at \$36.5 million). Ohio State had the nation's largest athletics budget at just under \$65 million.

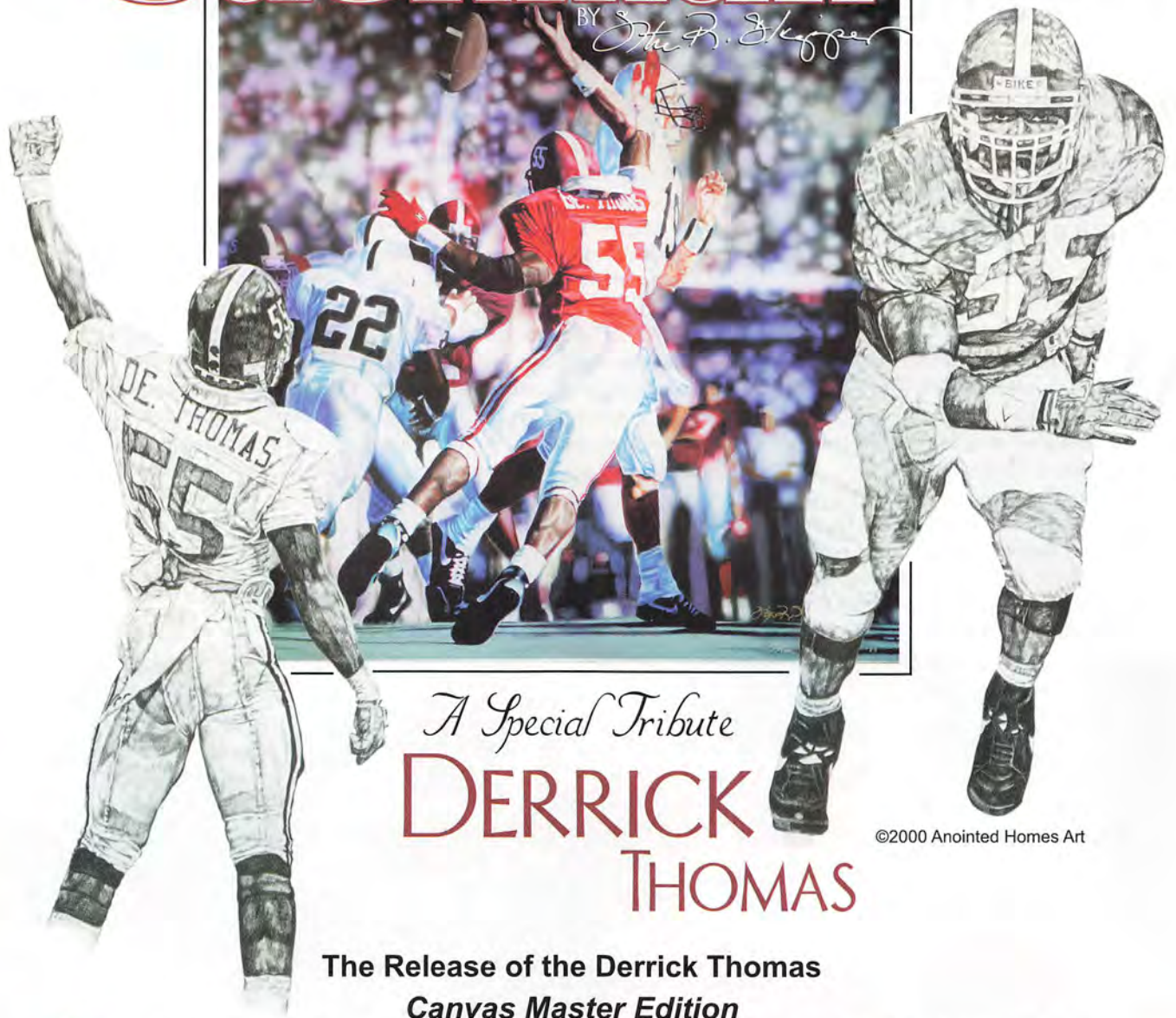
And Alabama's season-opening game being played in the Rose Bowl gave rise to additional controversy. Alabama's Million Dollar Band does not go to every Crimson Tide football game. When budgets were made last spring, it was determined that the band would make road trips to Tennessee and LSU this year. However, the Alabama fight song includes "Remember the Rose Bowl..." and there was sentiment to spend the half million or so dollars it would take to send the band to Pasadena.

The entire band (300 members) won't make the trip, but the National Alumni Association is footing the \$65,000 bill for a 60-member pep band to attend the game.

One irony: In Alabama's six Rose Bowl appearances, the band was never present.

THE Sackman

BY *Steve R. Skoger*



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His Success Will Not Be Surprise

by Jess Nicholas

Soph tackle is penciled in as the only new starter in Bama's offensive line

When the curtain came down on National Signing Day in February, 1998, Alabama fans collectively found themselves asking the same question: "Who is Lannis Baxley?"

The answer came in the form of a 6-4, 260 pound offensive lineman from Waynesboro, Georgia. Baxley may have been unknown to many Alabama fans, but he had caught the eye of talent evaluators in Georgia, who named him a Class 3A all-

state player. Baxley also found himself selected to play in the Georgia-Florida all-star game. But because he had not been a high-profile prospect as designated by regional and national "recruiting experts," Baxley was something of a mystery to those following the recruiting wars.

A few months after signing day, Baxley would catch the eye of fans as well when he showed up on the Alabama campus, standing taller and heavier than he did in February. For Baxley, it was just the first in a long line of unexpected surprises.

"Before I got here, I grew a lot," said Baxley of his physique. "I grew about one-and-a-half to two inches, and put on about 45 pounds." Coming as a surprise to no one, Baxley redshirted in the fall of 1998 to bulk up and learn Alabama's complicated offensive schemes. Then, in the fall of 1999, Baxley won the position as Chris Samuels' back-up at the left tackle position.

One could argue that being Chris Samuels' back-up was like being Cal Ripken Jr.'s back-up during his heyday with the Baltimore Orioles. In 1999, Samuels was putting the finishing touches on a career that would end with being the third player taken overall in the 2000 NFL Draft. And Samuels was also an Iron Man. In the Tide's 12 regular season games he played practically every down, a total of 887 snaps. Meanwhile, his back-up, Baxley, had only 81 plays, and all but 19 of those came in place-kicking situations.

Then, going into the 2000 Orange Bowl, Samuels came up lame—and suddenly, Baxley went from being a little-used back-up to being the man in the spotlight. True freshman Dante Ellington moved from right tackle to left tackle, and Baxley got his first collegiate start at the right tackle position.

"I was very excited and nervous," Baxley



Lannis Baxley (76) has made good strides in his time at Alabama. Now the third-year sophomore is expected to fill big shoes left on the offensive line by the graduation of Outland Trophy winner Chris Samuels.

Barry Fikes Photo

said. "I was sorry that Chris had to miss the game, but I was happy to be playing."

During the course of the Orange Bowl, Alabama's offensive line was often penalized for a multitude of violations, a key reason for the Crimson Tide's 35-34 overtime loss. The television cameras, aware of Baxley's inexperience, focused on the young player after most of the flags, giving the fans the impression that Baxley was to blame for most of the violations. Alabama Offensive Line Coach Neil Callaway said that was not the case.

"It wasn't just him," Callaway said. "It was everybody. The line had about ten penalties in all [Bama had 18 penalties for 132 yards in Miami], and only two were his. It was a good learning experience. What he does from here on is what's important."

Baxley agreed, saying he learned a lot from the game. "The best players I will ever see are the ones I go against in practice every day," he said. "But a game situation is totally different. You have to get things right the first time. There are no do-overs."

Now just a sophomore, Baxley finds himself penciled in as the starter for a team that has legitimate national championship aspirations. But even though it sometimes seems like yesterday when he was an undersized high school prospect, Baxley says he is not surprised

with where he is now.

"I'm pretty much where I expected to be," he said. "I expected I'd be starting by now, but you never know from year to year who they'll bring in during recruiting. I'm just really excited to be a part of it now. Everyone is expecting big things. It's hard to get to 13-0, but that's everyone's goal."

To that end, Baxley listens closely when Callaway speaks. "Coach Callaway is a great coach," Baxley said. "He'll tell you exactly where you stand and what you need to do."

In Baxley's case, what he needs to do is get stronger, says Callaway. "He was kind of a thin-bodied guy coming out of high school," said Callaway. "He's about 300 pounds now. You want that to be good weight, not bad. Lannis carries 300 well, but he needs to keep working. He has a lot more work to do. His best attribute is that he's athletic. He moves around pretty good."

Baxley agrees with his coach's evaluation. "I've got to get physically stronger; that's the biggest thing," he said.

Baxley says his pass blocking and run blocking skills are progressing equally. "I do both pretty well, but I'm trying to do both better to help the team," he said. "I'm always trying to improve."

Callaway agreed, adding that Baxley had improved greatly in the days since the Orange Bowl. "He blocks for the pass and the run about the same," Callaway said.

"But you go back to the Orange Bowl when Chris got hurt, and look at how Lannis is playing now. Coming out of spring practice, you could tell he's really stepped it up. I'm pleased with his progress. He's much more physical."

Callaway said that while the depth chart is not set in stone, Baxley goes into fall practice the clear leader at the right tackle position.

Despite reports to the contrary, Callaway said that Dante Ellington, who has battled weight troubles, would stay at left tackle, while Baxley will stay on the right side.

Callaway also complimented Baxley on things other than his actual on-the-field play. "He's a very good kid, and a good person," Callaway said. "He's just a joy to be around."

Those qualities will be important if the Tide is to take the next step up the ladder towards a championship. Baxley says the team is aware of the attitude it takes to be a championship contender.

"The biggest thing to remember is that we're a team, not individuals—even though a bunch will play one day in the NFL," Baxley said. "As long as we play with the concept of team, and stay a team, we'll be fine."

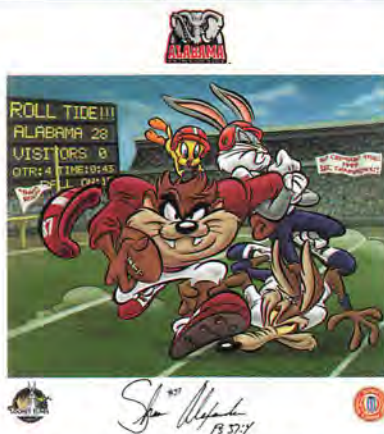
If the Crimson Tide follows Baxley's lead and adopts the team concept, a national championship might be just around the corner. And that would be a surprise to no one.



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He Loves The Challenge At Corner

by J.E. Lisby

Ability to start as freshman was key to improvement of secondary in 1999

Reform, Oxford, Geraldine and Jasper. Meridian, Mississippi. Lake Butler, Florida. Nashville, Tennessee. Sandersville, Georgia. A glance down the Alabama football roster reveals players from hometowns scattered throughout the Crimson Tide's primary recruiting area. Almost all football programs (Notre Dame and Nebraska are primary exceptions) sign the lion's share of their players from within a 200-300 mile radius of campus.

A closer look at the Bama list reveals hometowns located outside the South, representing young men willing to travel far to be a part of the Crimson Tide.

Such was the case with Gerald Dixon, a native of Burtonsville, Maryland, whose family is only one generation removed from Jamaica. "I knew about the great tradition at Alabama, even though I'm from up North," Dixon said. "When it came time to decide on my school, my heart led me to Alabama."

The South is rich in athletic ability, and Tide coaches have historically been able to assemble championship-caliber squads with mostly homegrown talent. But Alabama has always welcomed men from outside the region.

One constant of college recruiting is that quality "cover cornerbacks" are hard to find. "Cornerbacks are expected to do things that aren't normal," said Tide Defensive Backs Coach Charlie Harbison. "He's backing up full-speed, while receivers are running straight ahead. So it's important that a corner doesn't waste a lot of time changing direction from his backpedal until he starts running forward."

"Everything's done on instinct and you can't have a lot of false steps. Most people don't understand that just because you've got track speed, it doesn't mean you can play corner. You don't run straight lines in the secondary. Success is related to what kind of hips you have and also how well you change direction with your feet."

Standing a shade less than six feet tall, Dixon sports 185 pounds of solid muscle on a slender frame. That's combined with legiti-

mate track-team speed (he was one of the top prep sprinters in his region).

His coaches are most impressed with a different quality, one difficult to quantify but essential to the demands of the position. "Gerald's got great quickness and speed," said Tide Defensive Coordinator Ellis Johnson. "But probably the number one thing about him is his mental toughness. He's got the personality that you have to have to be able to play in the secondary, the mental toughness that allows you to come back after having a bad play."

The physical tools required to handle cornerback are rare enough, but the position demands more, what Harbison terms "short memory." Even the best athletes give up big plays. A difference between an average corner and an All-America is the ability to focus on the next snap. "If a bad play happens, put it out of your head," Dixon said. "Even a good play, just let it go. The next play is your best play. It's important to be physically tough, but there are a lot of people with the same physical talent as me. But there aren't a lot of people with the mental capacity to play cornerback."

When "Smoke" (a nickname Dixon gained from dust kicked up behind his heels as he ran the football during his first high school practice) first arrived on campus, his physical gifts gained immediate notice from Tide coaches. But it was his mental makeup that got him playing time on Saturdays. Johnson said Dixon's development, allowing the movement of Reggie Myles to free safety, was the key factor in the secondary's improvement.

As a true freshman Dixon started the last half of the season. He had an interception against LSU. For the year he had 28 tackles.

Starting a true freshman at cornerback was like waving a red flag in the face of opposing offensive coordinators. But Dixon had spent most of his prep career being avoided by opposing passers, and he relished the challenge.

"That was a brand new experience for me," Dixon said. "It was one I enjoyed. A lot of corners believe that if they're not getting passes, then they must be good. But the way I look at it until you throw at me, I don't know how good I can be. Last season made me a better person and eventually it's going to make me a better corner."

"I think I'm the best, but without the ball coming to me I can't prove that. If they stay away from me, I can get bored and lazy. But when the action comes to me, that's my favorite time. Then I can step up and play ball."

It's a refreshing attitude, but one the thoughtful young man believes he came by naturally. The second youngest of seven children, Dixon was raised in a large family with all the challenges (and blessings) that entails. "Everything's not always going to go right," Dixon said. "Mom and Dad can't always go out and buy seven different things. You've got to split up with your brother. All seven of us depended on each other and made each other stronger."

Growing up with multiple brothers and sisters taught Dixon cooperation, and forged a fierce competitive spirit—an attribute he now puts to good use on the football field.

"I'm more of a fighter," he said. "Growing up with seven of us—even though five were sisters, they were tough—I've always had to be that way. I've got the attitude that when I'm on the field I'm going to fight you 'til the last minute. Big guys, 200, 250 pounds, it doesn't matter. I'm going to 'bring it,' and you bring it, too."

But like the receivers they cover, cornerbacks are built for speed, not power. And the average corner when required to help in run support will either bump his man out of bounds or go low to trip him up. Dixon is different.

"When you spot that guy coming around the corner, you get a blank mind," he said. "First you work to get the receiver off you and zero in on the running back. Then it's just 'take him down.' If you want to go up top with him and he's 240 (pounds) and you're only 180—well, we're going to find out who's the better man. But you get him down any way you can."

His willingness to sacrifice his body tackling makes Dixon valuable on special teams. Lining up wide on the coverage units, it was his job to race downfield on kickoffs and punts, slicing around and through would-be blockers to get to the return man before he could turn upfield. "Playing 'gunner' on kicks is fun," Dixon said. "I really get a kick out of making plays in the wide-open field while everybody's watching. Instead of reacting to what my man is going to do, I can change roles and do the attacking. I returned punts in high school, but I'd rather do the hitting than get hit. I definitely want to continue playing special teams."

However, most of Dixon's work in the open field is guarding a 'lonesome edge' of the Alabama defense—locking up, and shutting down his man. "Gerald likes the challenge," Johnson said. "To play out there alone under pressure where everybody can see you in a one-on-one matchup. Gerald

wants to be that guy who makes the play to stop a drive or win a game. He's got that makeup about him."

Dixon aims to exert his will over his man, over his fears and most importantly over the outcome of the play. "When I'm locked up one on one with a receiver, I remind myself that he's afraid of making a mistake just as much as I am," Dixon said. "My coaches told me to always be patient; never rush anything because the play will come to you. I'm expecting that he'll make a mistake before me, and I'll take advantage of it."

"Then, as the quarterback calls the signals I try to clear my mind and think about the technique I'm going to use. You just try to lock up your man. Sure, there are mind games that go on—you always want to knock him off his stride and disrupt the pattern—but it's even more of a technical battle. You can play mind games all day, but that won't win. Preventing your man from catching the ball is what wins games."

Even the best defensive backs get beaten. The key is how the athlete reacts. In a matchup with the defending national champion last year, Dixon experienced that hard truth. Early in the second half with the score tied at seven, Dixon found himself locked up with Tennessee speedster David Martin on a long post-pattern. Running with Martin stride for stride, the true freshman was literally next to his man when the ball arrived at the goal line a split second before Dixon turned.

The young Tide cornerback had near-perfect coverage on the play, but the result remained. Touchdown Tennessee. "It's just like that sometimes," Dixon said. "You can cover them all the way down the field, but if the quarterback puts the ball right there and you turn around a millisecond too late, then they can score. If you give up a touchdown, you've just got to go to the sideline; forget it and come back and play. We'll play Tennessee again, and I hope I do better. But I've got to worry about every week."

Dixon said the memory is one he'll forever carry with him: not as a failure to eat away at his confidence, but rather as a goad to improve. He said, "It was the first touchdown scored on me, and every time I go out on the field I tell myself I don't want that to happen again. At the time I did everything I possibly could do, but he beat me. So I'll just have to try harder to get that edge and next time get an interception out of it."

Because he relishes his responsibility, Dixon enjoys the sense of isolation playing cornerback provides. "You could say that corners are alone on every play," Dixon said. "Every zone defense eventually turns into a



Gerald Dixon was one of the top freshmen players in the Southeastern Conference last year, earning a starting job at cornerback midway through the season. This year he's expected to be a stalwart in what many believe will be an excellent Bama secondary.
Barry Fikes Photo

'man.' More often than not you feel like it's just you and him. Getting up close and risking getting beat is all about how tough you are, physically and mentally. You're not going to win every time you go up there.

You've just got to forget about the last play and concentrate on winning this time.

"When it comes down to it, all the coverages in the world are worthless unless you believe in yourself."



Having Two Is An Advantage

by Kirk McNair

Andrew Zow, Tyler Watts
continue to compete

One of the interesting quotes finding its way into football stories over the past few months has been that of Alabama Quarterbacks Coach Charlie Stubbs saying that he thinks Alabama has the best two quarterbacks around...but that what he wants is the best one quarterback. Yes, Alabama does want to be a one-quarterback team. But, as Stubbs is quick to add, thus far neither Andrew Zow nor Tyler Watts has done so well as to relegate the other to the bench.

For now, both Zow, an upcoming junior who has generally been the starter over the past two years, and Watts, an upcoming sophomore who came in under fire last season and proved his mettle, can expect to see significant playing time, at least early in the season.

Stubbs and Head Coach Mike DuBose learned last year that there must be a plan to make use of the two talented players. It is probable that the plan that went into effect late last year—Zow being the quarterback one series, Watts the next, and that sequence continuing regardless of situation—will not be this year's plan. But because at times last year Watts got left out of the mix, there will be some plan to make sure he gets his snaps.

And it's not out of the question that later this season Watts could be the starter and the plan would be implemented for the benefit of Zow. But a statement like that would be considered controversial, and if there's no other constant, one around the football offices at Alabama is that there is no controversy. There is a competition.

"It's a situation," Watts said. "We have two good quarterbacks and we both want to play. We've both had success. It's the job of the coaches to see who does the best."

There's no doubt whom Watts thinks that will be. "I'm going to beat him out," Watts said.

That doesn't change their personal relationship. "We get along fine," Watts said.

Andrew Zow has been Alabama's starting quarterback for the past year and a half and expects to have that same title as he heads into his junior season.

Barry Fikes Photo

"There's no friction whatsoever between us. Why should there be? We're both working hard and we're both out here for the same purpose. We're on the same team. Football has nothing to do with it being personal. That's why we completely disregard any talk of controversy."

Zow said, "We don't sit around and talk about a so-called controversy. I think I let talk of it get to me a little last fall. But all I think about is trying to help this team get to the next level. I've had an opportunity to go out and play for The University of Alabama and I thank God for that every day. But I'm competing against myself. If I'm better each day than I was the day before, I think I'll be fine. And I think the same goes for Tyler. If he improves each day, he'll be fine."

Zow added, "My goal is to perform on the practice field and be the number one guy."

Stubbs doesn't have any idea which of his two standouts will emerge as Alabama's next star quarterback, but he's expecting excellence from at least one of them. In his office overlooking Bama's Thomas Field practice facility, Stubbs has 12 photographs on a wall. They are past Tide quarterbacks Bart Starr, Joe Namath, Steve Sloan, Kenny Stabler, Scott Hunter, Richard Todd, Jeff Rutledge, Walter Lewis, Gary Hollingsworth and Jay Barker (the coach admits that's not all of Bama's great quarterbacks). Next to those pictures is a spot for another frame, occupied by a small sign: "Who's Next?" It's a posting seen on a regular basis by Zow and Watts as they meet in Stubbs' office.

"I think now is the time for one of them to show that he's special," Stubbs said. "But it may be that both will do that."

While the two are very close in the quarterback race, they are not the same type quarterbacks. Stubbs said, "I can prepare them both with the game plan and both are able to do everything in that plan. But now I know that with one in the game I emphasize something more than I would with the other."

"Andrew is the out-of-pocket quarterback who can make the throws that have to get there in a hurry. And he's a good ball-faker."

"Tyler has the ability to run out of the pocket, a run-pass threat. We have more things in to let his legs get involved in the package because he's a very good runner." [Watts calls himself "a drop-back passer who will run it every now and again."]

While Stubbs believes both can do everything in the offensive plan, he knows when he's talking with his quarterbacks what parts of the package each has the most confidence

in executing, and that plays into the play-calling.

Both young quarterbacks have shown the potential to be special. Zow had an auspicious debut in 1998, taking over the quarterback job midway through a game against highly-regarded Florida and nearly leading Bama to an upset victory. Watts was not able to overtake Zow in the battle to be the starting quarterback last year, but he did get some quality playing time and was generally credited for making the plays in big Alabama victories, including the Tide's Southeastern Conference Western Division-clinching victory over Auburn in Auburn.

Zow, 6-2, 215, was Alabama's leading passer last year as he completed 148 of 264 passes (56.1 per cent) for 1,799 yards with 12 touchdowns and nine interceptions. He saw action in 11 of Bama's 12 regular season games. Watts, who played in nine games prior to the Orange Bowl, completed 47 of 83 passes (56.6 per cent) for 498 yards and two touchdowns with five interceptions. Watts was the better runner of the two, 24 rushes for 49 net yards compared to Zow's 33 carries for losses of 37 yards.

Ironically, it is games in which they did not play that has led to the so-called controversy and which may have led to last year's season-ending game plan of alternating the quarterbacks on series.

Zow was injured during Alabama's 21-7 loss to Tennessee. He missed the next two games, against Southern Miss and LSU, and Watts, even without heralded tailback Shaun Alexander (also injured against Tennessee), quarterbacked Bama to solid decisions. A week later, against Mississippi State, Zow was back and he played the entire game. Although Zow was not particularly impressive and sometimes was obviously struggling (Bama converted only one of 11 third down plays), Watts never took a snap.

"I was pretty down," Watts admitted. "But I knew I'd get another chance to play and that I had to keep preparing. Before the Auburn game my position coach told me to be ready."

It was after the Mississippi State game that Alabama's coaching staff determined that Watts had to have an opportunity to play.

Watts said that going into the game against the Tide's cross-state rival that "I was ready to play. And it's not that I played great, but I didn't make mistakes. I hit a few guys and I let the offensive line and the running backs and the receivers win the game."

Watts did hit his receivers. Although Zow ended up with slightly more passing yardage, it was Watts who quarterbacked the entire second half and led the Tide to its comeback 28-17 win.

For the final two games of the year, the SEC Championship Game in which Bama drilled Florida, 34-7, and the 35-34 overtime Orange Bowl loss to Michigan, the Tide coaching staff came up with the unique plan of having the two quarterbacks alternate series. No one can fault the offense for Bama not having a 2-0 record in those games.

Watts said that both he and Zow have improved. "Sitting out as a freshman is tough on a player," Watts said of the redshirt seasons both he and Zow had. "It's good in the long run, but bad in the short run because you are away from football for a year. You really haven't even practiced; just watched. And then you have to get used to the speed of things in a game."

Watts made the interesting observation that he thinks one reason he improved last year was "getting a chance to play terrible. I went into the Tennessee game after Andrew got hurt and I didn't get anything done. But you learn from your mistakes. I made up my mind that would never happen again. And I played better the rest of the year."

Stubbs said, "I was excited coming out of the 1999 season because I knew we had two championship-quality quarterbacks. We had prepared them both as starters during the season and there was no drop-off by either in the spring. Both got the reps they needed and both made progress."

Another guy in the quarterback plan didn't get spring work. However, wide receiver Freddie Milons, who was Most Valuable Player in the SEC Championship Game in part because of his quarterback play from the spread (shotgun) formation, will be part of the offensive package.

"We'll go to Chapter Two with Freddie," Stubbs said. "We'll have a good selection of plays for him, including more pass plays. He'll spend some time with me each day at practice, getting his snaps, working through some things."

"But," the coach added, "with the time restraints and number of total players, you can only get about two quarterbacks prepared. If you need more than that, you've probably had a tough year."

By "tough year," Stubbs means the possibility of injury. And having two quality quarterbacks is good insurance. "This is a physical conference," Stubbs said, "and they let them hit the quarterbacks. So that's one reason we're really talking about having two quarterbacks."

Stubbs has pointed out that "The rules

make it difficult for a quarterback to beat someone out in practice." Rules have cut squad sizes, practice days, and days in which there is full contact work.

He also said that "Neither one of them is going to back down. They both know that if they don't come out ready—if they don't come out and have a good practice every day—that it won't be a two-man race, because the other guy is going to be ready and is going to have a good practice."

The Tide assistant admits that he doesn't expect 29 days of practice before the opener against UCLA to determine the quarterback. "Someone may do something to make himself special, but I don't foresee that," Stubbs said. "I think it will have to come on the field in games."

Stubbs saw evidence in the spring of both developing better leadership skills. "I think before then they may have been waiting for someone else to step forward," the coach said.

Stubbs said, "I don't believe their teammates are concerned about which one is in there."

Both quarterbacks reported back to campus in early July for the second semester of summer school. This is not a coincidence and it's not because either needs to catch up academically. All across the nation players return to their schools in the summer in order to work out together on their own. Although Bama coaches may be able to watch these workouts from their offices, the coaches are not allowed on the field with the players. And so it falls to the quarterbacks to run these voluntary pass skill drills which involve quarterbacks, receivers, running backs, defensive backs and linebackers.

Stubbs noted, "There's a lot more participation now than there was three years ago. They probably weren't sold before on what we were going to do insofar as opening up the offense."

The coach pointed out the importance of this summer work. "We want to start that first practice like we're a championship type team," Stubbs said. "We don't want to have to retrace what we've done. We want no wasted time."

Watts said he and Zow throw three days a week "and I may go out and just toss it around a fourth day." There's also conditioning work and weight-lifting, although Zow said, "I lift a little bit; not a lot. If I lift a lot I end up getting too big." Zow also said that the ankle injury he suffered last fall, and which bothered him in the spring, is still "a little problem. I don't think it will affect my play, but I am aware of it."

Watts said, "The guys have really cooper-

ated. Things are going fast and we're getting a lot done. It's a matter of us getting comfortable together, throwing and receiving, working on our timing and a rhythm."

Andrew had one other significant event this summer. On June 16 he was married. He and Amebriss have been going together since early in their high school days at Union County High School in Lake Butler, Florida.

Going into spring practice, Head Coach Mike DuBose said that he wanted the quarterbacks to improve their reading of defenses, that he wanted them to read the defense "quicker," then make adjustments in Alabama's play if needed. In short, he wants them to be more "coach on the field" than they have been.

Stubbs said, "We're getting better at that. For one thing, we're getting the play called quicker, which gives the quarterback more time to read." He added, "We don't want to make a lot of changes, but if the defense has guessed right for the play we've called and we have a chance for a negative play, or the quarterback sees a defense that gives us the opportunity for a big play, he needs to make the change."

Zow said, "I think I improved a little bit. I don't think I made the giant step to see what Coach DuBose sees. But I think I'm closer to being able to make those calls. We need to be able to see blitzes and coverages quicker so we can get into right play."

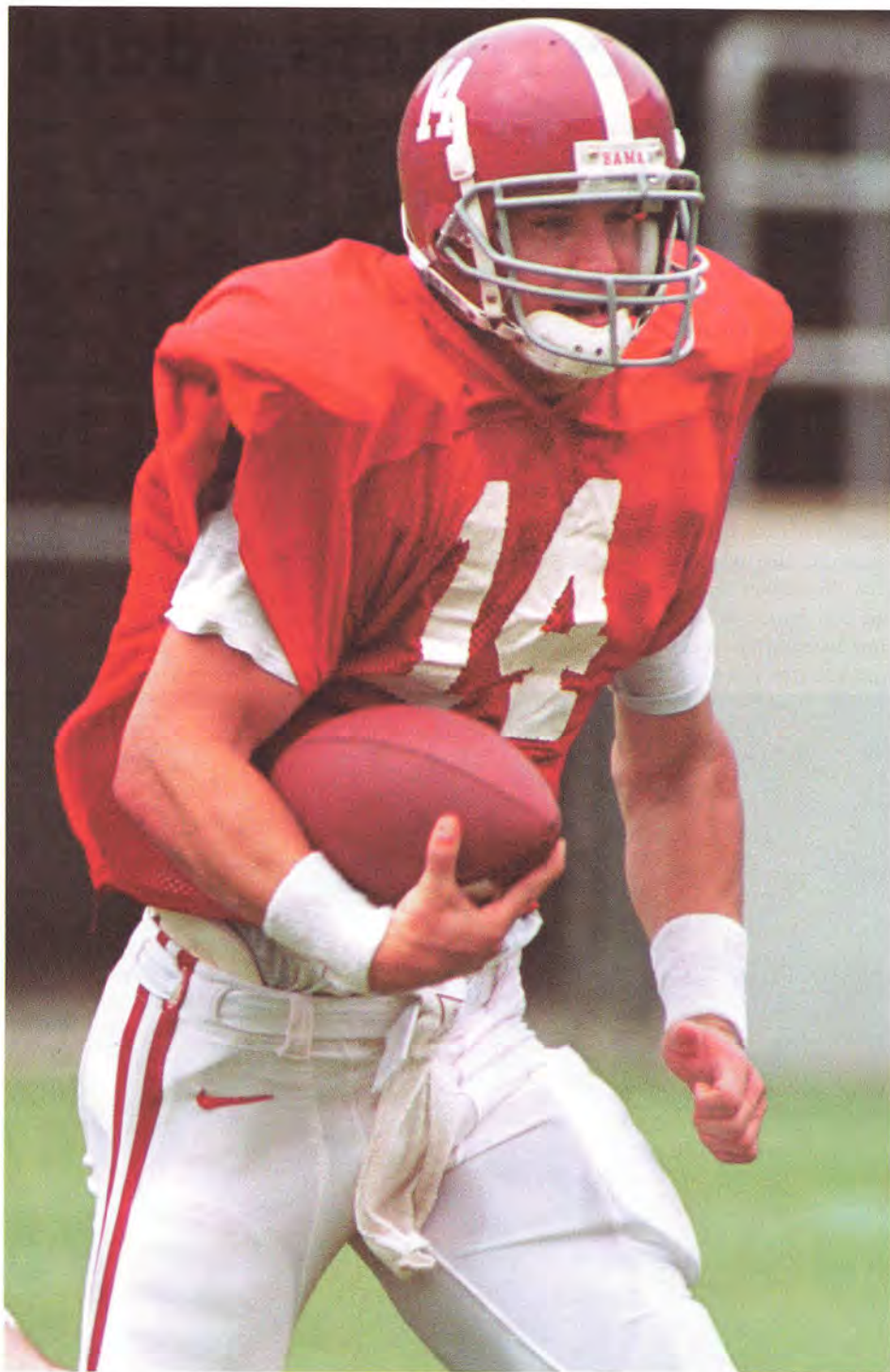
However, as Watts pointed out, "The only way we can learn to read quicker is through reps. And by reps, I mean mine and Andrew's, because when he's taking the snap, I'm watching the defense with him and learning. I think it will come, and it's very important. The quicker I make the read, the quicker I get the ball into the hands of a play-maker."

There are other areas in which both hope to show improvement. In the past, Andrew has had a reputation of throwing the ball too far or too hard for his receivers, while Tyler has the rap of not having an arm strong enough to make certain passes.

Zow said, "Sometimes I throw the pass too hard. Sometimes my arm gets away from me, and I throw it too far. I need to give the receiver a chance to make a play on the ball. I need to let them make plays with a little 'air' instead of trying to make the catch for them with a perfect pass. I think I made some progress in that area this spring. I think that's a matter of being relaxed."

"It's mental and a matter of reps to make it instinctive."

Watts said, "There's no one aspect of my game that needs improvement. It's every-



Tyler Watts had some success as a redshirt freshman in 1999 and he hopes to win the starting job as Alabama's quarterback this fall. Barry Fikes Photo

thing. Drop-back passing, reading (the defense), play-calling, even down to calling the cadence. You never perfect any phase of this game."

Still, he understands his arm strength being questioned. "I've worked on that," he said. "The strength is there. I've just got to use all of my body, not just my arm, in mak-

ing the pass. I think it's coming around. But as long as it's complete, I think it's okay." He did say that he would be disappointed if he completed fewer than 60 per cent of his passes this year.

Watts is sometimes criticized for running instead of standing in the pocket longer and trying to find a receiver. Watts said, "I try to

run the play that's called, but I don't want to take a sack and I'm not just going to throw it up for grabs. So if I see a hole and think I can pick up five or six yards or more, that's what I'm going to do. I think that keeps the linebackers honest, too, where they have to worry about the quarterback run and that may take them off a receiver."

The Tide quarterbacks are happy with the Alabama offensive plan. Zow said, "A quarterback will love this offense. It's built around the quarterback, but the quarterback doesn't have to win the game by himself. We have the long pass and the short pass and good running backs. We're not going to throw it deep every time, but now it's a part of the game plan that we can go vertically. I think we'll take our shots this year"

Stubbs said, "We're not where we need to be with this offense, but we're getting better. We need to improve our ball security (cut down on turnovers); we need to stretch the field vertically (we've done a pretty good job of stretching it horizontally); and we've got to make the defense defend everyone—the tight ends and the running backs and the wide receivers.

"We need to have an answer for everything the defense does."

He said that Alabama has the personnel to be a big play offense.

Stubbs said that one thing that needs to be added to the Bama attack is "two 50-yard pass completions per game. That's 100 yards of offense, that's a ton in field position, and that changes the way the defense has to play us." He said a reasonable goal for the Tide is to average about 420 yards of offense and 32 points per game.

And as Zow said, "With our defense, that should be plenty good enough."

Zow is quite optimistic going into 2000. "I think this could be the year," he said. "I think the work ethic this team has, the senior leadership, there's no reason we shouldn't win it all. We have all the talent in the world at every position and we have character. We just need to go out and play to our potential. And the leaders need to lead and the coaches need to continue to do what they do.

"I expect the first few games to be tough, but if we'll go out and play well and establish a rhythm, I think this team has the talent to keep that rhythm going throughout the season."

Zow said, "I'm going to try to control what I can do; not try to do too much; try to relax; be a complete quarterback.

"I look forward to this season. I think I'll be more confident. I know I didn't play last fall like I'm capable. I want to help this team the best way I can."

Young, Energetic Recruiters Added

by J.E.Lisby

Men add Johnny Jones, while Brittney Ezell returns to her alma mater

The respective routes traveled by Johnny Jones and Brittney Ezell—the two newest additions to Alabama's basketball coaching family—on their journeys to Tuscaloosa were markedly different. Yet the two are alike in several ways and share their most important traits. Both have remarkable talent and limitless futures in coaching.

Jones joins the Tide basketball staff, replacing Robert "Rah Rah" Scott, who succumbed to cancer after a prolonged illness. Diagnosed with stomach cancer (one of the most virulent forms of the disease) well before the season began, Scott was determined to continue coaching until literally he could do no more. An inspiration throughout the year, he attended all but three games with his team, despite repeated chemotherapy treatments that often left the former championship athlete almost too weak to walk.

Scott was one coach who believed in getting close to his team, and the Tide players responded with their devotion. The long season was difficult for the young men, forced to watch as a man they loved was ravaged by cruel illness. Scott died May 9, but not before the entire squad visited him a final time in the hospital. No one spoke the words, but all present realized it was a good-bye trip. Yet despite his pain and shockingly weakened state, Scott remained the teacher and role model to the very end. Calling upon reserves of energy he really didn't have, Scott laughed and joked with the players making certain they understood his message that hard work always pays off.

Men like 'Rah Rah' Scott cannot be replaced. But one of the best things about Johnny Jones' hiring is that he understands the unique concerns involved with joining the Tide staff. "I was very happy to know how much people cared for Coach Scott," Jones said. "He was an outstanding man who did a terrific job. He meant a lot to

Alabama, but The University also meant a lot to him. And you could see that.

"My reception by the Alabama family has been great, but it was a very sensitive situation. The coaches and players had gone through a lot. It was very difficult for them, which makes it a little tough for anyone to come in. But I'm not here to take somebody's place."

Highly regarded in the coaching community, Jones seems destined to one day head up a major program on his own. In fact, last season he served as interim head coach for the University of Memphis, assuming that responsibility scant days before the season began when scandal forced the resignation of the head coach. Turmoil and inexperience combined to limit his squad's effectiveness, but Jones was well

liked and respected by the Memphis fans who appreciated his hard work and solid character.

When it came time to hire a permanent head coach, Jones was seriously considered for the position. But the Memphis administrators ultimately decided to head in another direction, to bring in a "name" coach (John Calipari). Through no fault of his own, Jones found himself unemployed.

Tide Head Coach Mark Gottfried knew that it would take a special person to handle the difficult challenge of taking Scott's place on the staff. But he is convinced that Jones is the man for the job. "I'm frankly excited about Johnny Jones joining our staff," Gottfried said. "Having played in this league, having participated in Final Fours and having the experience of having coached in the Southeastern Conference, he



Johnny Jones has an exceptional basketball resume, one reason he was selected by Tide Head Basketball Coach Mark Gottfried to fill the spot left vacant by the death of Robert "Rah Rah" Scott. Jones served as interim head coach at Memphis last season. He is a former star player and assistant coach at LSU.

University of Memphis Photo by Troy Glasgow

'BAMA, Inside The Crimson Tide/AUGUST 2000

brings a great deal of credibility to the table."

Before taking the job with Memphis, Jones spent 14 years at LSU. There, after excelling at guard on some of Dale Brown's best teams, he moved directly into coaching when his playing career ended. "I'd like to think that as a player I was somewhat of an extension of the coach," Jones related. "I was actually quite fortunate in that I went directly from player to student assistant to graduate assistant to assistant coach."

Understanding how unusual it was for a man his age to have that opportunity, Jones threw himself into his work and proved especially good at recruiting. As a Bengal Tigers assistant, Jones helped sign Randy Livingston (at the time the number one recruit in the nation), Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf (then known as Chris Jackson) and a man by the name of Shaquille O'Neal. In fact, the Lakers mega-star and current NBA Most Valuable Player contacted Gottfried personally to lobby on behalf of his friend.

Jones acknowledges his reputation as an outstanding recruiter, but the soft-spoken Louisiana native claims no unusual talent. In fact, he lists the everyday virtues of credibility, preparation and hard work as the most important factors in convincing a youngster to sign. "I think the key in recruiting is being yourself with the kids," Jones said. "People can read through anything phony. Parents really do an excellent job. If you introduce yourself well and are persistent in what you're doing then you can build a relationship.

"Plus, I think it's important that you know everything about him. Do your homework. You've almost got to be an investigator. You've got to know all the pieces, because any little mistake or wrong turn can be the difference between signing a kid or him going elsewhere.

"What parents want to know is: do you have their son's best interests at heart? When parents see that, when they feel you care about their son, then it becomes more than basketball. You want to be able to see the young man grow, be an extension of his home and become an even better person. You want him to continue to grow while he's with you so you can send him home a better man."

Turning their sons into good men is the primary concern of parents. But fans are more impressed with championships, and those require superior athletes. In basketball one or two all-stars can turn a team around,



Brittney Ezell was one of the most popular players in Alabama women's basketball history, and now she's returned to her alma mater as an assistant coach. University of Nebraska Photo

and a trip to the Final Four can be a financial bonanza. So the competition for the top-flight talent in college basketball is fierce.

Again, Jones deflects attention away from his personal role. According to him, if your program is good enough, it will sell itself. "I think most importantly you have to have something that athletes would want to be a part of," Jones said. "If you don't have a great program, a great product, it's difficult to sell. I've been fortunate to be associated with quality institutions. And I've been fortunate to work for outstanding coaches, which makes my job easier."

The other recent newcomer to the Tide basketball coaching community will also be expected to help recruit

championship-caliber talent. Like Jones, Brittney Ezell was also once the point guard for her school, functioning as a virtual coach on the floor. And while she lacks Jones' years of coaching experience, she has the advantage of an intimate knowledge of Alabama and its fans.

Scarcely more than two years ago, Ezell completed her playing career at The Capstone. It was a basketball career that included numerous individual awards (she's second all-time for Alabama in assists, games played and games started) and four consecutive trips to the NCAA Sweet 16. But it was her personality and passion for Tide basketball that made her a fan favorite. "I guess you could say I'm Alabama through and through," Ezell said. "Actually, that

would put it mildly. I was very emotional; energetic; a very passionate player.

"I always considered myself an entertainer of sorts. I tried to involve the fans in the game as much as I could, to let them think that they were living through me. Whether I was a good player or not, I don't know. But more than anything I think I was a fun player to watch."

With a personality beyond bubbly and a warm, infectious laugh, Ezell is nothing if not enthusiastic about her alma mater. "I loved playing for Alabama," she said. "It definitely was the best four years of my life."

Like Jones, a major part of Ezell's job will be convincing athletes to play basketball for Alabama. And it's infinitely easier to peddle something that you believe in. "As much love as I have for Alabama, selling someone on coming to The University is the easiest job in the world for me," Ezell said. "Coaching involves evaluating talent, talking to parents, and talking to kids. Those are things that I've always loved to do. I was actually sort of a recruiter when I played. I was the student host, and most of the kids that came in to visit were mine."

From the moment Ezell starts talking, it's obvious why her coaches let her handle that role in college. An engaging personality, wonderful laugh and quick wit give her the remarkable ability to make friends of strangers in an instant.

Tide Head Coach Rick Moody knew what he was doing when he brought the 5-4 fireball with the irrepressible spirit "home" after her one-year stint at Nebraska. But as her former college coach, Moody also knew he was getting a savvy assistant with a clear view of how the game should be played. "Coach Moody called me 'The Engine' from the day I got there, because I kind of ran things," Ezell said. "I've always been a sort of coach on the floor when I played. I understand the game, and I pride myself on being able to communicate really well with different types of personalities. I think that helped me a lot playing and now coaching."

Both Jones and Ezell wasted no time moving into the coaching ranks. But that early entry meant they faced the challenge of coaching players barely younger than themselves. "But it's really been a fairly easy transition for me," Ezell said. "I guess when I

played I always considered myself more of a coach. I wasn't a superstar. I just understood and knew the game well, and that's made coaching a lot easier. It's a little odd being back on campus. Everything's got a different feel to it, but nothing's been difficult."

Unlike Jones, Ezell isn't certain that her ultimate goal is to become a head coach. Her soon-to-be-completed master's degree is in Sports Administration, and for now she's just looking to learn. "I really don't know about maybe being a head coach one day," Ezell said. "The good Lord has led me in the right direction so far and I'm going to trust him to push me toward what he wants me to do with my life. I'm still learning the game, and I think I'm in an ideal spot. I just want to know it all."

"I told Coach Moody when I interviewed for the job that I consider myself a student still. I'm watching our entire staff. The day I quit wanting to know is the day that I move on and try to do something else. I'm only 24 and there are still a lot of things that I want to do, and right now I really just want to be a student of life. Basketball has given me the opportunity to learn and I'm just super excited about being back at Alabama."

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Tide Sports Have Losses, Gains

by Kirk McNair

Baseball, softball, track have new assistants

In addition to the new assistant coaches in men's and women's basketball (Page 20), there have been other changes in staff among Crimson Tide sports. Two Tide teams lost assistant coaches to head coaching jobs. Former Assistant Baseball Coach Todd Butler is the new head coach at McNeese State in Lake Charles, Louisiana, while former Assistant Softball Coach Karen Johns accepted the head coaching job at Florida.

Butler had been with Bama for six years, since Head Coach Jim Wells arrived at The Capstone. In those six years Bama has been in six NCAA regional finals, won four Southeastern Conference Tournament championships and a regular season title, and made three appearances in the College World Series with one runner-up finish.

Butler is a 1991 graduate of McNeese State, where he was a shortstop (1984-86). He finished his baseball career at Oklahoma, then spent a few years playing minor league baseball. He returned to McNeese as a student assistant in 1990. In 1992 he coached at Blinn Junior College in Texas, then returned to McNeese in 1993-94.

Butler has been Bama's first base coach and was hitting instructor and recruiter, as well as working with outfielders.

Although no announcement has been made as to a replacement for Butler, it is widely believed that Head Coach Jim Wells will promote Jim Gatewood, current director of baseball operations, to the coaching position. Gatewood has been with the Tide staff the past two years and has had responsibilities for travel, scheduling, and the various baseball camps conducted in the winter and summer by the Alabama coaching staff.

Gatewood came to Alabama after serving eight years as head baseball coach at Richardson (Texas) High School. Before that he had been an assistant to Wells at Northwestern State University in Louisiana (1988-90), where he earned his master's degree. He coached the infield at Northwestern State and the team led the NCAA in fielding (.980) in 1990. He earned his undergraduate degree at Henderson State, where he was an all-district catcher, and played in the minor league system for the St. Louis Cardinals.

Former Tide player Chris Moller will continue as volunteer coach.

Over the years there has been a suspicion that Florida had snatched some athletes from Alabama, but this spring the Gators went after a Tide coach. Johns, the pitchers and catchers coach for Alabama's softball team, coached the Alabama pitching staff to a national best 66 wins. She was an integral part in the Crimson Tide making its first ever Women's College World Series appearance.

"I think it's a very exciting opportunity to go into a program with such high expectations and commitment towards winning," Johns said. "I feel our success and trip to the World Series this season, made the Florida administration feel comfortable about hiring an assistant coach to take over the full-time duties."

Under Johns' eye, sophomore pitcher Shelley Laird posted 38 wins, good enough for third best in the country and All-America honors, and freshman catcher Lacy Prejean was named the first ever SEC Freshman of the Year.

Johns came to Alabama as an assistant coach in 1997, the first year the school had a program. Prior to coming to Alabama, she was an assistant coach at South Carolina for five years. Johns was also a four-time All-America with the Gamecocks before moving on to international competition where she won gold medals at the ISF World Championships and the United States Olympic Festival.

Ironically, the Florida hiring could have a domino effect in Alabama athletics. Karen is married to Bobby Johns, the former Alabama All-America football player who is now head coach at West Alabama. Bobby has announced he will resign that position and go to Gainesville following this season. Reliable reports have Bama Assistant Coach Dabo Swinney as a likely strong candidate for the West Alabama head football coaching job.

Meanwhile, Head Softball Coach Patrick Murphy has hired former All-America Vann Stuedeman to replace Johns.

Stuedeman, a Birmingham native, played collegiately at Huntingdon College from 1991-94 where she earned All-America honors her senior year as a pitcher. During her four years at Huntingdon, she helped the team reach the national tournament twice, both times finishing third.

She then went on to become a graduate assistant at the University of West Alabama while earning her masters degree in Elementary Education. While at West Alabama, Stuedeman helped lead the team to the Gulf South Conference Championship in 1995, while the team's head coach

was away from the team due to pregnancy. The championship was the first in the '90s for the West Alabama program.

After spending two seasons at UWA, Stuedeman went to the University of Alabama at Huntsville to assist her sister, Les Stuedeman, for the next three years. While in Huntsville, she helped lead the program to two GSC championships, three NCAA Regional appearances and trip to the 1999 Division II National Tournament.

She then accepted the head coaching position at East Limestone High School, in Limestone County, where she led the team to its first winning season since 1994 and one game shy of the state tournament.

The Capstone is not an unfamiliar place for Stuedeman. "My parents and my grandparents all went here," she said. "My father was a football trainer under Coach Bryant. I grew up coming to football games. I don't know where else I'd want to be. Just to be a part of the staff here is an honor."

Men's Track and Field Coach Harvey Glance has announced the addition of Joe Walker as an assistant to his coaching staff. Walker will work with the Tide's distance runners and cross country team. He replaces David Troy, who has moved into an administrative position.

Walker joins the Crimson Tide following a three-year stint as an assistant coach at South Alabama. While at USA, he helped lead athletes to NCAA cross country and indoor individual championships. Walker also helped lead the Jaguars to several Sun Belt team titles.

"I am extremely excited to have Joe joining my staff at Alabama," said Glance. "He is a proven coach with valuable experience as an assistant and head coach. He has developed many successful athletes. In addition, Joe is a tremendous recruiter. I look forward to what he brings to the table for our program."

Prior to his tenure at South Alabama, Walker served as the head coach for men's and women's track and field at Meridian (Mississippi) Community College. During his stay at MCC, he guided the team to national championships in cross country, indoor, and outdoor track and field. Twice named National Indoor Championship Coach of the Year, Walker coached 16 individual national champions and 74 All-American performers while at Meridian.

A 1994 graduate of the University of Mississippi, Walker was a four-time Academic All-SEC performer for the Rebels. He was a member of Ole Miss' world ranked 4x1500m squad in 1994 and finished his career with the third best 3,000m time in UM history.

Here Are More New Crimson Tiders

by Donna Fromme

Basketball, baseball, gymnastics, golf, track, and tennis add players

Although a number of signees for various winter and spring sports teams were announced before the end of the school year in May, a handful of athletes in various sports signed scholarship papers with the Crimson Tide this summer.

Alabama Head Men's Basketball Coach Mark Gottfried picked up a big name and a good player when Reggie Rambo selected the Crimson Tide late in the spring. Rambo is a 6-foot-7, 220 pound forward from Lena, Louisiana. He averaged 18 points and 12 rebounds this past season at Peabody High School and was named first team all-state. His play led Peabody to the 2000 state basketball championship.

"I think Reggie is a good interior player who can score around the basket," says Gottfried. "He's strong. He's also a very good shooter. He'll give us additional help around the basket. I'm very excited about adding Reggie to our program. He's not only a good player, but I think he's a great guy, and that's important to our program."

It seems as if a college baseball coach's recruiting is never done. Even though Head Coach Jim Wells and his staff signed a number of players in the early signing period last November, there was more recruiting to be done this summer after the Major League Draft claimed three Bama underclassmen in second baseman Sam Bozanich (New York Yankees), catcher Kelley Gullledge (Minnesota) and pitcher Jonathan Blankenship (who wasn't drafted, but who signed a free agent contract with the Yankees), along with a handful of those early signees (pitcher Brandon Mims, first baseman Tony Cancio, pitcher Michael Machen). Additionally, three other underclassmen quit the Tide last spring (catcher Rock Mills and outfielders Ben King and Erik Smallwood).

This summer Wells has added three signees.

Outfielder Gabe Scott (Lake Charles, Louisiana), infielder Adam Pavkovich



Reggie Rambo

(Venice, Florida), and infielder Beau Heard (Jennings, Louisiana) have joined the Crimson Tide. Scott and Pavkovich are incoming freshmen, while Heard is transferring to The Capstone from Tulane University in New Orleans.

Scott (6-2, 205) played at Barbe High School, where his team played for the state championship three of the last four years, winning the title in 1998 and 2000. Barbe was state runnerup in 1999. As a junior and senior, Scott belted 21 home runs and knocked in 92 runs. A two-year all-state selection, Scott was a starting outfielder in the 2000 Louisiana High School All-Star game. A four-time all-district selection, Scott is first cousin to Chad Ogea, who pitched at LSU and now hurls for the American League's Cleveland Indians.

Pavkovich (6-1, 170) played for Venice High School, which won three district championships (1998-2000) and finished runner-up in the state tournament in 1999. As a senior, he batted .356 with four home runs and 26 RBI. He also led the team with 35 runs scored. The co-captain of his high school team, Pavkovich was chosen to participate in the West Florida High School All-Star Classic and Team One Showcase. Pavkovich was also a three-time All-Tournament selection at the Sarasota Baseball Classic, where he won MVP honors in 1999. He was named to the Dunedin Springs Baseball All-Tournament Team in 1999.

Heard (5-10, 190) will transfer to Alabama from Tulane, where he played as a freshman in 2000. While with the Green Wave, he batted .238 with one home run and 19 RBI in limited duty as a back-up infielder. Prior to playing at Tulane, Heard batted .588 with 11 home runs and 44 RBI as a senior at Jennings High School. He was named *USA Today* Honorable Mention All-America in 1997 and 1999. A four-time all-state selection, Heard led Jennings High School to four consecutive appearances in the state playoffs. He concluded his prep career with a .558 average, 128 hits, 44 doubles, 23 home runs, 128 RBI and a 1.100 slugging percentage, all school records.

Two young women have signed on with the perennial national power Tide gymnastics team of Coach Sarah Patterson. One of those has a family legacy in the sport. Jeana Rice, who is from Longwood, Florida, is the daughter of Joan Gnat who Rice says competed in the 1972 Olympics. Her mother was her club coach. Rice has been a national team member for four years, from 1996-2000.

Tiffany Byrd, who is from the same area as Rice as an Orlando resident, learned about the Tide through the power of television. She said she was watching for a friend she trained with who was competing for Florida in the 1997 NCAA championships which are usually televised (tape delayed). While watching the broadcast, she quickly became a Meredith Willard and Stephanie Wood fan and was sold on Alabama gymnastics. Byrd has several top five all-around finishes, including her most recent successes, a first place all-around finish at the Sand Dollar meet and a meet in Arizona and a second place all-around finish at the American Challenge.

Among the latest additions to the Alabama family from overseas is a Norwegian golfer. No one can blame Coach Dick Spiby for going the Norse route. His junior ace, Are Larsen, also a native of Norway, advanced to the NCAA Championships last season and excelled in the classroom as an Academic All-Southeastern Conference standout.

Joining Larsen on the Alabama team this fall is Lars Petter Brovold of Fredrikstad, Norway. Brovold and Larsen knew one another growing up in a juniors career that found Brovold emerging as the Norwegian

national champion in 1997. His best career round so far is a 65.

Men's track and field signees of Coach Harvey Glance include an All-America pole vault champion, an All-America jumper, and a state medallist sprinter.

Brian Rohrer of Vancouver, Washington, and Columbia River High School won the 1999 NWAAC pole vault championship. He's a two-time All-America who also competes in the decathlon.

Crestview, Florida native Alton Smith is a four-time Junior College All-America. He competes in the long jump, triple jump and the high jump and won a bronze medal in the 1998 indoor USATF championships.

State medallist Calvin Reddin of Las Vegas brings his expertise in the 100 meters, 200 meters and 400 meters to Alabama.

And Jevon Mason, a San Antonio, Texas, native who has been a state and national qualifier in the 400 meters, has also signed with Alabama, as has Matt Lyn, a four-time regional champion who has set records in three different age groups for four events—the 100 meters, 200 meters, 400 meters and 400-meter hurdles. He's from Barrie, Ontario. In 1998 Lyn competed on the Canadian Junior Tour Team.

Additional signees on the Tide women's track and field team of Coach Sandy Fowler include Eva Danielsen of Oslo, Norway. Danielsen was the 1998 and 1999 national junior champion in the hammer throw, setting the national junior record of 53.33 meters along the way. She'll bring international experience to the Tide squad with her background at the Junior European Championships, and her events also include the discus where her best includes a 39 meter throw and the shot-put.

Coach Adam Steinberg's men's tennis team has signed the 1998 USTA National Interscholastic Champion, Michael Ray Pallares. Pallares, who began competing in tennis by age seven after starting the sport at age four, is transferring from the University of Louisiana-Lafayette after a season there. He led the Cajuns in wins and helped his team to a national ranking as high as Number 28.

The Dean's List student won the USTA National Interscholastic Championship in 1998 as a junior player and, in 1999, he won the USTA National Port Washington Easter Classic. Pallares posted wins last season against three top 60 ranked collegiate play-



Michael Ray Pallares

ers. Pallares is a native of Leonia, New Jersey and was a 1999 graduate of Leonia High School. He led the Lions to the 1998 and 1999 New Jersey State Sectional Championships. He was the county champion as both a junior and senior and was a two-time team Most Valuable Player.

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Top Players Have Interest In Bama

by James Edwards

Signing day is far away, but there are many names of prospects linked to Tide

Who wants to be a Crimson Tide football player? With Alabama playing like a million dollars much of last season, and Bama ranked among the nation's very best teams coming into the 2000 season, it's no wonder that major prospects from around the South have an interest in Coach Mike DuBose's team.

Alabama has had excellent recruiting seasons the past few years, and many think another national championship in Tuscaloosa in the near future is a distinct possibility. Getting a piece of that championship pie appeals to high school football stars. And, conversely, a final ingredient in that championship pie may be the next Tide recruiting class.

The South is once again loaded with super blue-chip players, and the name "Alabama" is being linked to several of the more prominent names. Bama appears to be in that enviable position of being able to be selective with its scholarships. That means only the elite should be expected to get early offers from the Crimson Tide, and then only at positions where Alabama has a need.

Alabama coaches put a lot of emphasis on their summer camp. A number of players in the past couple of recruiting classes first caught the eyes of Alabama coaches while participating in the summer camp. Indeed, as many as 20 current Alabama players received invitations to wear the crimson and white after performing well in the camps.

This year's summerfest drew both talented campers and unofficial visitors. Among those participating in the camp were:

Bryan Bass, wide receiver, 6-1, 180, 4.5 (40-yard dash time), Fayette County; Tyler Vaughn, linebacker, 6-4, 200, 4.8, Lynn; Steven Bouldin, quarterback, 6-5, 220, 4.5, Crossville; Brandon Brooks, wingback, 5-5, 155, 4.3, Birmingham Shades Valley; Josh Crouch, quarterback, 6-3, 165, 4.8, Chatom Washington County; Brodie Croyle, quarterback, 6-3, 204, 4.65, Rainbow City Westbrook Christian; B.J. Dean, linebacker, 6-0, 230, 4.55, Tuscaloosa Central; Derrick



Von Ewing

Duckworth, linebacker, 6-1, 228, 4.6, Mize, Mississippi; Sam Dudley, tight end, 6-3, 255, 4.75, Tuscaloosa Central; Daniel Forrest, quarterback, 6-2, 200, 5.0, Katy (Texas) Faith West Academy; Cedric Hampton, tight end, 6-3, 246, 4.8, Courtland; Matt Henshaw, quarterback, 6-4, 195, 4.65, Brentwood, Tennessee; Clint Johnston, tight end, 6-4, 235, 4.8, Wetumpka; Anthony Madison, cornerback, 5-10, 175, 4.4, Thomasville; Ingle Martin, quarterback, 6-4, 205, 4.55, Nashville (Tennessee) MBA; Anthony Mix, wide receiver, 6-4, 223, 4.45, Bay Minette Baldwin County; Melvin Oliver, defensive end, 6-4, 245, 4.75, Opelika; Andre Rollins, wide receiver, 6-3, 180, 4.5, Miami (Florida) Carol City; LeMarcus Rowell, linebacker, 6-4, 220, 4.5, Opelika; Mark Sanders, offensive tackle, 6-7, 305, 5.1, Ashville; Sean Sanderson, fullback, 6-3, 250, 4.55, Knoxville (Tennessee) Farragut; Brandon Washington, tight end, 6-4, 270, 4.85, Tuscaloosa Central; Reggie Weeks, defensive end, 6-5, 275, 4.9, Smiths Station; Marcus West, defensive end, 6-4, 225, 4.8, Columbus, Mississippi; and Randy Woods, athlete, 5-11, 170, 4.4, Huntsville Johnson.

In addition to those 26 high-profile participants (from among over 1,000 who participated in the camps), no fewer than four nationally-known prospects made unofficial visits to the campus during the camp period. They are:

Ratavious Biddle, wide receiver, 6-1, 170, 4.4, Decatur; Von Ewing, offensive tackle, 6-5, 297, 5.1, Charles Henderson of Troy;

George Gause, defensive end, 6-5, 235, 4.6, Conway, South Carolina; and Carnell Williams, running back, 6-0, 195, 4.4, Attalla Etowah.

The three players of that group from within Alabama are well-known to Crimson Tide recruiting buffs. The fourth, Gause, is generally considered the number one player in the Palmetto State. A number of South Carolina prospects are thought to be interested in Bama.

After the results of recruiting in recent years, there's no reason for anyone to suspect that Alabama will not again be aiming for a national top ten year (or better) on Signing Day in February. Indeed, a handful of top stars have already announced they will accept Crimson Tide scholarship offers. They are:

Wide receiver Brandon Brooks (who is best known for his skills as a kick return specialist), offensive lineman Von Ewing (who has reportedly been an active "extra" recruiter for Bama as he talks to other top prep stars), offensive tackle Mark Sanders (the brother of incoming Bama punter Matt Sanders), tight end Brandon Washington (who has also starred as a defensive lineman in high school), and linebacker Dave Peterson, 6-3, 245, 4.65, a 1998 Bama signee from Liberty County High School in Bristol, Florida, who is now at Coffeyville (Kansas) Community College.

In addition to those attending Alabama's camp, there are other top stars around the state and region who have been linked to Bama. That does not necessarily mean these players are on the wish list of the Crimson Tide recruiters. Here by states are some of those, who have been linked with the Crimson Tide:

ALABAMA

Justin Barnett, offensive tackle, 6-6, 310, 5.1, Brookwood; Patrick Billings, linebacker, 6-3, 235, 4.55, Town Creek Hazlewood; Tony Bonds, defensive tackle, 6-3, 280, 4.95, Russellville; Pierre Brown, linebacker, 6-1, 215, 4.55, Birmingham Shades Valley; Tavaurus Doyle, running back, 6-2, 198, 4.55, Pinson Clay-Chalkville; Donell Horton, wingback, 5-9, 175, 4.4, Attalla Etowah; Avery House, offensive tackle, 6-5, 285, 5.2, Springville; Spencer Pennington, quarterback, 6-4, 200, 4.6, Fayette County; Chris Pointer, cornerback, 5-11, 175, 4.4, Moulton Lawrence County; Freddie Roach, linebacker, 6-2, 230, 4.55, Killen Brooks;

Michael Robinson, wide receiver, 6-3, 195, 4.4, Birmingham Jackson-Olin; Kelsey Sheppard, running back, 6-0, 210, 4.5, Prattville; Justin Tuck, tight end, 6-5, 210, 4.6, Rockford Coosa Central; Keldrick Williams, running back, 5-9, 195, 4.4, Montgomery Sidney Lanier; and Lorenzo Williams, cornerback, 6-0, 180, 4.5, Skipperville G.W. Long.

ARKANSAS

Dearrius Howard, running back, 6-2, 220, 4.45, West Memphis; and Beau Shrable, fullback, 6-0, 235, 4.8, Osceola.

FLORIDA

Matthias Askew, defensive tackle, 6-6, 285, 4.9, Fort Lauderdale Dillard; Rashad Butler, offensive tackle, 6-5, 285, 5.1, Palm Beach Gardens Dwyer; Jerome Carter, strong safety, 6-1, 200, 4.5, Lake City Columbia; Marcus Clemons, tight end, 6-7, 263, 4.85, Titusville Astronaut; Mike DeGory, offensive tackle, 6-5, 310, 5.2, Melbourne Palm Bay; Charles Frederick, wide receiver, 5-11, 175, Boca Raton Pope John Paul II; Frank Gore, running back, 5-11, 195, 4.45, Coral Gables; Ron Lunford, offensive tackle, 6-5, 320, 5.2, Jacksonville Ed White; Rod Olds, offensive guard, 6-3, 270, 5.1, Panama City Rutherford; Tim Pope, linebacker, 6-3, 225, 4.6, Panama City Rutherford; Antrel Rolle, cornerback, 6-1, 195, 4.4, Homestead South

Dade; Blake Williams, offensive tackle, 6-4, 270, 4.8, Kissimmee Osceola; and John Wilson, offensive tackle, 6-8, 320, 5.2, Daytona Beach Mainland.

GEORGIA

Larue Beck, safety, 6-3, 200, 4.4, Marietta; Quentin Burrell, cornerback, 6-0, 175, 4.5, Decatur Southwest DeKalb; Jabari Davis, running back, 6-0, 230, 4.6, Tucker; Gary Higgins, defensive tackle, 6-5, 305, 5.0, Atlanta Lovejoy; Pedro Holiday, wide receiver, 6-2, 175, 4.5, Lindale Pepperell; J.R. Lemon, running back, 6-2, 215, 4.5, Tyrone Sandy Creek; William Revill, linebacker, 6-3, 220, 4.7, Albany Dougherty; and Derrick Tinsley, running back, 6-0, 180, 4.4, Marietta.

LOUISIANA

DeAndre Alexander, defensive end, 6-4, 215, 4.5, Arcadia; Michael Clayton, wide receiver, 6-4, 205, 4.5, Baton Rouge Christian Life; Marquise Hill, defensive tackle, 6-5, 280, 4.7, New Orleans De La Salle; Ronnie Prude, wide receiver, 6-0, 175, 4.34, Shreveport Fair Park; Marcus Spears, tight end, 6-5, 280, 4.9, Baton Rouge Southern Lab; Karlin Riley, strong safety, 6-3, 195, 4.5, Opelousas; and Andrew Whitworth, offensive tackle, 6-7, 300, 5.2, West Monroe.

MISSISSIPPI

James Dean, fullback, 6-0, 220, 4.6,

Batesville South Panola; Marquez DuPree, running back, 6-0, 200, 4.5, Philadelphia, Mississippi; Keith Houston, strong safety, 6-4, 210, 4.6, Philadelphia; Jarred McDougle, linebacker, 6-0, 230, 4.65, Clinton; Mike McLaughlin, place-kicker, 6-1, 190, 4.8, Gautier; Ladwan Pratt, safety, 6-1, 190, 4.5, Calhoun City; and Jeremy Ruffin, linebacker, 6-3, 210, 4.6, Meridian.

NORTH CAROLINA

Tracey Smith, wide receiver, 6-3, 180, 4.5, Bunn.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Charles Bennett, defensive end, 6-4, 210, 4.7, Camden; Jeff Littlejohn, defensive tackle, 6-3, 285, 5.1, Gaffney; and Les Rice, offensive tackle, 6-4, 310, 5.4, Greenwood.

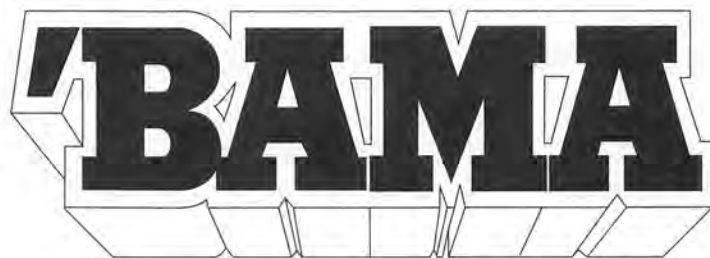
TENNESSEE

James Corder III, offensive tackle, 6-7, 300, Nashville Christ Presbyterian; Justin Chunn, running back, 6-2, 205, 4.55, Nashville David Lipscomb; Deon Johnson, running back, 6-1, 180, 4.4, Memphis Westside; Derron Johnson, safety, 6-4, 205, 4.4, Memphis Melrose; John Poe, linebacker, 6-0, 220, 4.6, Covington; and Steven Ross, offensive guard, 6-5, 265, 4.95, Nashville Christ Presbyterian.

TEXAS

Cedric Benson, running back, 5-11, 200, 4.45, Midland Lee.

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BAMA SCORECARD

Newton In Hall

C.M. Newton, head men's basketball coach at Alabama from 1969-80, has been named one of the six inductees in the Class of 2000 in the Basketball Hall of Fame. Newton, whose record at Alabama was 211-123, was selected in his first year of eligibility as a nominee.

Newton, who recently retired as director of Athletics at Kentucky, played basketball for the Wildcats. When his 1972 Alabama team beat Adolph Rupp's Kentucky team 73-70 in Tuscaloosa, the win made Newton the only former Rupp player to coach a victory over the legendary Kentucky mentor.

Newton's 1973 Alabama team went 22-8 and advanced to the NIT Final Four. The next three seasons, Newton coached Alabama to three consecutive Southeastern Conference Championships in 1974, 1975 and 1976. Alabama went 67-14 during that three year span.

In 1975 Newton guided Alabama to its first ever NCAA tournament berth. Alabama made headlines in 1976 when it upset North Carolina in the NCAA tournament's second round. Alabama advanced to the NCAA "Sweet 16" that year, falling to eventual national champion, Indiana.

His former Alabama players included names like NBA stars Reginald "Mule" King, Leon Douglas and Eddie Phillips and head Charlotte Sting coach T.R. Dunn (also an NBA player and coach).

Newton left Alabama in 1980 and went to work in Birmingham as a commissioner in the Southeastern Conference office. He later returned to coaching at Vanderbilt before returning to his alma mater to be Kentucky's athletics director.

Newton has been a key member of United States Basketball and for many years served as chairman of the NCAA Tournament Selection Committee.

Tom Kelsey

Barely two months after Tide Assistant Basketball coach Robert "Rah-Rah" Scott's death to cancer in May, Alabama's basketball staff got another scare when assistant coach Tom Kelsey underwent surgery to remove his left kidney on June 20. The operation was performed by Dr. Ken Aldridge at DCH Regional Medical Center in Tuscaloosa.

Kelsey had what was described as a golf ball sized tumor that was malignant, but it was contained in that kidney. There were no signs of the cancer in his lymph nodes or anywhere else leaving Kelsey a prognosis for a full recovery.

Kelsey remained hospitalized for several days and has been recovering at his home in Tuscaloosa. It is not immediately known when he will be cleared to return to work as the removal of the vital organ will take many weeks for his body to recover and for his strength to return.

Assistant Coach Philip Pearson, who stepped into a recruiting role when Scott

was too ill to recruit, assumed recruiting duties during Kelsey's recovery.

Foot Problems

No fewer than three members of the 2000-2001 Alabama men's basketball team have been sporting walking boots this summer. Returning guard Terrance "Doc" Martin and highly-regarded incoming wing player Gerald Wallace both suffered a broken foot during the summer. Guard Travis Stinnett, who has missed virtually all of his first two seasons with injury, has had an ankle problem.

Wallace, the Naismith National Prep Player of the Year from Childersburg, entered Alabama in summer school and told Trainer John Morr that his foot was bothering him. An examination showed he had suffered a fractured second metatarsal on his right foot some two to three weeks earlier. The fracture was non-displaced, meaning surgery was not necessary.

Surgery was necessary for Martin, who fractured the fifth metatarsal on his left foot.

Kenny Walker, an upcoming sophomore inside player who missed much of last season with a stress fracture in his leg, has not taken part in full-speed summer pickup games because of lingering problems with the leg. Walker did return from his injury late last season.

Walker Gets Award

In an awards show that was televised live throughout the state of Florida with a list of winners that included golf great Tiger Woods, tennis great Pete Sampras and baseball's Jose Canseco, Alabama basketball player Kenny Walker came out a winner. Walker, a 6-foot-9 forward who will be a sophomore on the Crimson Tide basketball team, was named Amateur Men's Basketball Player of the Year at the fifth annual Florida Sports Awards.

The awards recognize the top professional sports performances of 1999 in the state as well as the top amateur athletes, coaches and teams in North Florida.

Winning for his 1999 senior season at Wolfson High School in Jacksonville, Walker was unable to attend the awards show because he was in Tuscaloosa attending summer school. He was honored for his part in leading Wolfson to a 31-4 record in 1999. Wolfson finished as state runnerup despite Walker's championship game performance that included 17 points, 12 rebounds and five blocks. Walker had 369 rebounds his senior season to leave with 1,134 career rebounds and 544 career blocks. He was a first team All-State selection and CNN rated him No. 3 in the nation at his position his senior season, a year in which he averaged 16 points, 11 rebounds and six blocks a game.

Thousands of athletes are nominated for the Florida Sports Awards, which are also called "Jaspers." From those nominations,

each category is narrowed down to three finalists, and the winner is drawn from those three names. There are 15 amateur categories and 12 professional categories.

Walker's fellow award winners included Pro Baseball Player of the Year Jose Canseco of Tampa Bay, Pro Basketball Player of the Year Alonzo Mourning of the Miami Heat, Pro Driver of the Year Mark Martin, Pro Football Player of the Year Jimmy Smith of the Jacksonville Jaguars, Pro Men's Golfer of the Year Tiger Woods, Pro Men's Tennis Player of the Year Pete Sampras and women's winner Serena Williams, and AT&T Wireless Florida Pro Athlete of the Century Jack Nicklaus, among others.

In his first season at Alabama this past year, Walker averaged 6.1 points and 4.2 rebounds. He was forced to sit out for much of the Southeastern Conference portion of the season, recovering from a broken tibia.

Early Commitment

Maurice Williams, a 6-1 guard at Murrah High School in Jackson, Mississippi, announced this summer that he is committed to Alabama. Williams averaged 25.8 points and 7.3 assists per game in leading his team to a runner-up finish in the state basketball tournament. He selected the Tide over a long list of schools that included Indiana, Miami, Tennessee, Texas and Georgetown, as well as Mississippi State and Ole Miss. He's from the same school as former Tide star James Robinson.

Maravich Signs

Jaeson Maravich, who was a walk-on and played a couple of games for Alabama's basketball team in 1999, has signed with McNeese State after averaging 26 points per game last year at Gulf Coast Community College. He is the son of the late Pete Maravich, a Hall of Fame star at LSU.

Softball Honors

The Crimson Tide softball program is still feeling the effects of a 66-14 record and a trip to the 2000 Women's College World Series. Head coach Patrick Murphy was named the NFCA (National Fastpitch Coaches of America) South Region Coach of the Year, while juniors Ginger Jones and Kelly Kretschman and sophomore Shelley Laird were named First Team Easton All-America.

The Crimson Tide was also named, along with four other schools, the Easton Team of the Year, based on season-long performance and success.

Bama finished the season with its highest national ranking ever, number six. The Tide had been ranked 11th going into the NCAA Tournament. Alabama's victory total of 66 tied national champion Oklahoma for most wins in the nation. That mark shattered the previous Tide record of 49 victories.

Murphy said, "This team will go down in history as the first [Bama team] to win a

post-season game, the first to beat a Pac-10 team, the first to go the World Series and get a win."

Laird, Jones and Kretschman were also first team All-SEC. Catcher Lacy Prejean was named SEC Freshman of the Year and was joined on the All-SEC Second Team by infielder Suzanne Olcott and outfielder Christy Kyle.

Golf Titles

Alabama women's golf team members Sarah Johnston and Paula Carter had impressive summer victories. Johnston, an upcoming junior from Benton, Louisiana, out-dued top-ranked amateur Beth Bauer to win the Women's Southern Amateur, 2-1, at Ibis Golf and Country Club in West Palm Beach, Florida. Carter, a senior from Paris, Tennessee, won her second Tennessee State Women's Amateur at Ridgely Country Club in Kingsport.

Golf Job

In 1997, former Alabama women's golfer Judi Schneider Pavon was working at a driving range when she answered an ad for the job of assistant women's golf coach at Tennessee. She got that job. And this spring, when Tennessee's head coach unexpectedly resigned late in the season, Pavon became interim head coach in time to lead the Lady Vols to a fifth place national finish. This summer she was named head coach. The Helena, Montana, native earned All-SEC and All-America honors during her playing career at Bama in the late 1980s and was an Academic All-America and 1989 winner of the Paul "Bear" Bryant Student-Athlete of the Year.

National Champion

Alabama senior Tim Broe won the national championship in the 3,000-meter steeplechase at this year's NCAA Championships, propelling Coach Harvey Glance's team to a seventh place finish. The Bama women of Coach Sandy Fowler finished 15th.

Olympic Duties

Alabama Women's Track and Field Coach Sandy Fowler, an alternate on the 1980 United States Olympic Team which boycotted the Moscow Olympics, will participate with the United States squad at this year's Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia. Fowler is an assistant coach on the US women's track and field team as coach of throws (shot put, discus, hammer).

Diving Success

Alabama diver Lane Bassham, along with her partner, Lauryn McCalley of Moss Farms Diving, won the three-meter synchronized diving title at the University of Minnesota-hosted U.S. National Diving Championships.

Bassham, a Crimson Tide freshman last season, and McCalley, beat five-time national synchronized three-meter champions Kathy Pesek and Tracy Bonner. The University of Tennessee duo missed a sixth synchro title by four points.

Bassham also performed well on her own. On the three-meter board, the

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Moultrie, Georgia, native finished ninth with a 449.64. That mark qualified her for the U.S. Olympic Trials. She finished 16th on the one meter board with a 228.24.

Former Tide NCAA Champion Brent Roberts also fared well, finaling on the platform, finishing sixth with a 550.95. Roberts, a member of the 1998 U.S. World Championship team, also qualified for the 2000 U.S. Olympic Trials.

Both posted top ten finishes in the Trials.

Roberts, the 1998 NCAA 10-meter diving champion and two-time Southeastern Conference Diver of the Year, finished fourth off the 10-meter tower. Internationally, Roberts was a member of the 1997 U.S. World Championship team.

Bassham, Alabama's lone scorer at last year's NCAA Championship as a freshman, finished eighth off the 10-meter.

Tennis Rankings

The Alabama men's tennis team of Coach Adam Steinberg finished 50th in the final team college rankings for 2000. Two singles players were ranked among the top 100 individuals in the national singles rankings. Francisco Rodriguez, a two-time All-American who was a senior this season, finished his final year of college play at number 47 nationally. Rodriguez qualified for nationals all four years he played for the Crimson Tide.

His teammate Maxim Belski begins his collegiate career with a number 62 national singles rankings for his freshman year of play.

Belski and Rodriguez teamed together in doubles, and it was a pairing that sent them to compete in the national doubles championships. The duo finished 16th in the final rankings.

Open Champion

One of the top international tennis tournaments is the Australian Open. This year's title in men's doubles was won by Ellis Ferreira, a former three-time All-America at Alabama, teaming with Rick Leach.

Volleyball Travelers

Alabama volleyball players Michelle Green, Shelly Adamcik and Lexee Marshall joined several other collegiate players as United States team members at the recently completed Sibillini Invitational Tournament in Comunanza, Italy. The collegians were split into two squads and faced international club teams from throughout Europe. Green and Adamcik, playing on the same team, helped guide their group to a tournament championship while Marshall's squad finished fifth at the event.

Green, a senior-to-be from Rolla, Missouri,

continued her stellar play from last season. A 1999 first-team All-SEC selection, Green was chosen the tournament's Outstanding Hitter after putting on a hitting exhibition during tourney action.

Practice for the 2000 volleyball season under Coach Judy Green begins August 9.

The Sting Connection

The WNBA's Charlotte Sting might also be nicknamed the "Alabama Sting." The Crimson Tide has a trio involved with that organization. The head coach is T.R. Dunn, a Birmingham native who was captain of the Tide men's basketball team in 1976 and 1977 and lettered from 1974-77. Dunn was a 13-year veteran in the NBA before he moved over to the coaching side.

Among the players he is coaching are two former Tide All-Americans. Two-time All-America guard Niesa Johnson, who led Alabama to the Final Four in 1994, is in her second season with the Sting. And the Sting's latest acquisition, is former Tide All-America Shalonda Enis. Enis made history in the Sting organization as a part of its first trade. Dunn snagged her from the Washington Mystics. The Alabama trio opens its first season together on June 1.

Hall Of Famer

The Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame recently inducted two of the most famous college quarterbacks from the Volunteer State. Ironically, both played at rivals of the University of Tennessee. They are Steve Spurrier of Johnson City, who played at Florida, and Steve Sloan of Cleveland, a former Alabama star. Sloan is now director of athletics at Central Florida. Central Florida will be Alabama's Homecoming opponent on October 28.

CoSIDA Awards

A feature story written by Roots Woodruff, assistant director of Alabama's athletic media relations department, was named National Story of the Year in the 1999-2000 College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) writing contest.

Woodruff also won two of the writing contest divisions and was third in another.

In addition to being named National Story of the Year, his feature, "Style and Balance" on Gymnastics Coaches Sarah and David Patterson took top honors in the Coach/Administrator Profile and Best Presentation of Story categories. The Savannah, Georgia, native became the first honoree to earn both Best Presentation of Story and National Story of the Year in the same contest.

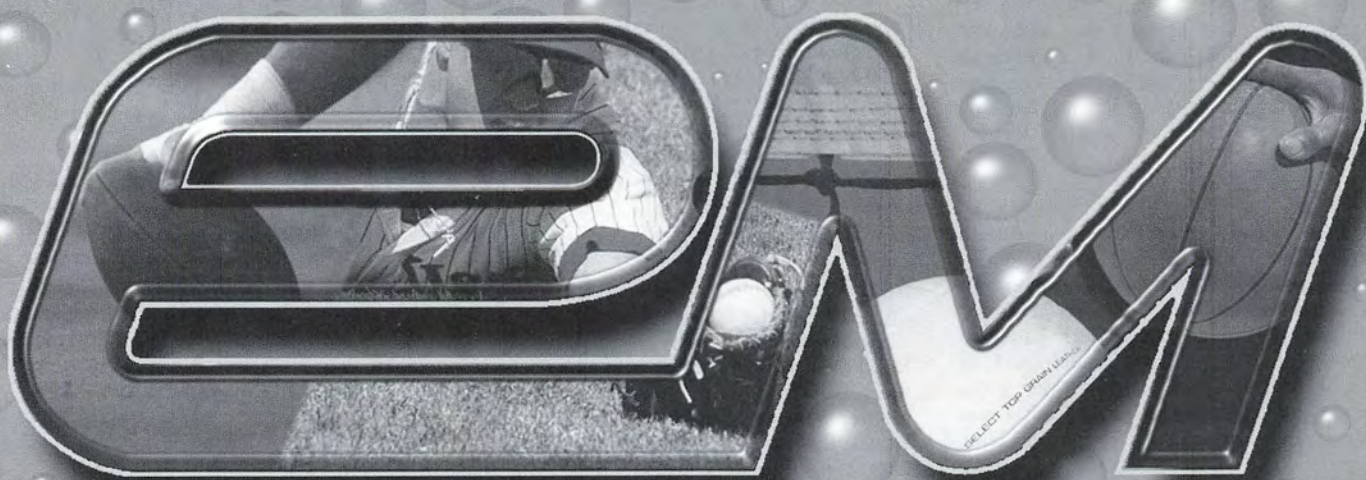
Other members of the media relations department winning honors are:

Director Larry White and Erika Olson, second in nation for Football Game Program.

Becky Hopf, sixth in nation for Men's Golf Media Guide.

Brian Morgan, second in district and fifth in nation for Women's Golf Media Guide, and first in district for Volleyball Media Guide.

Barry Allen, second in district for Baseball Media Guide.



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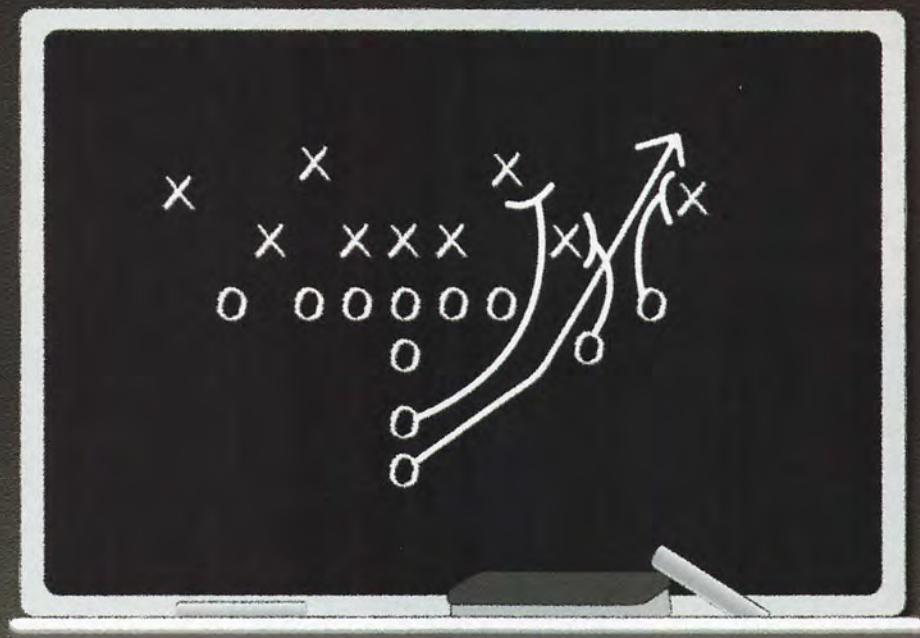
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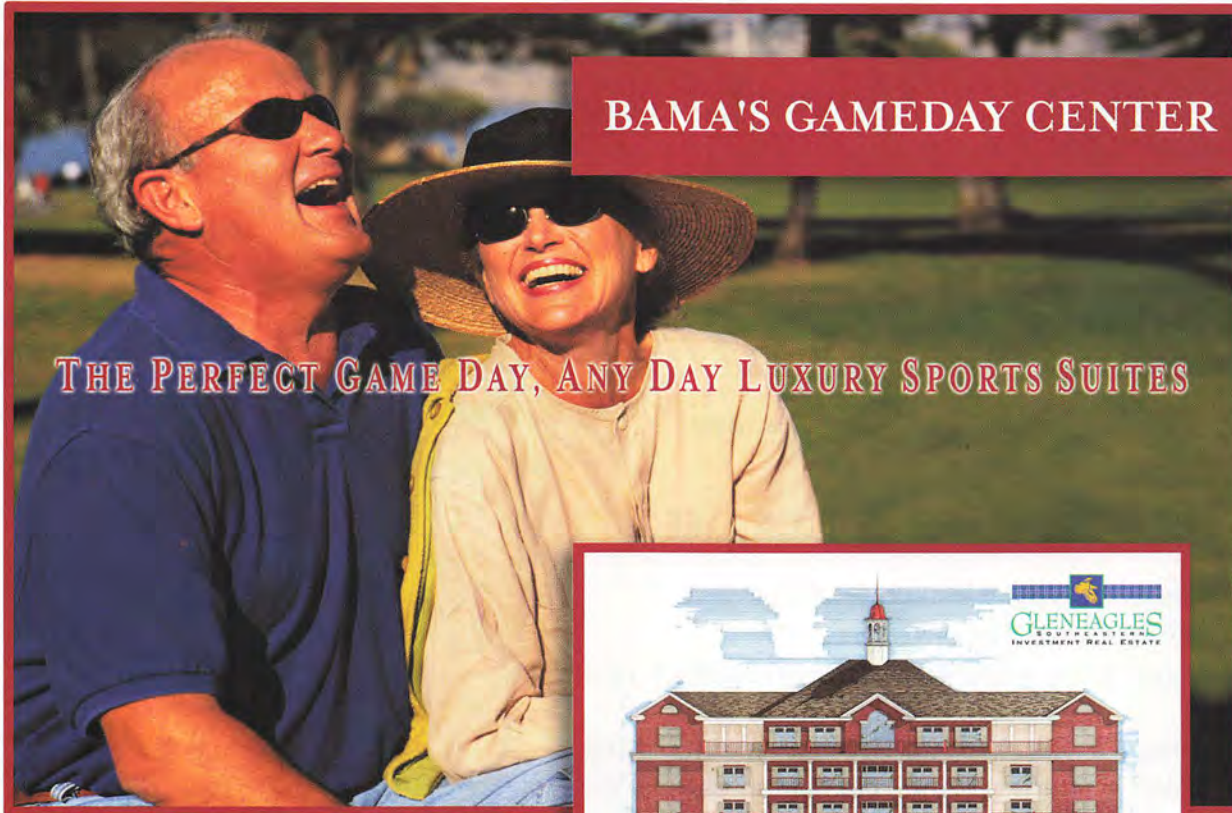
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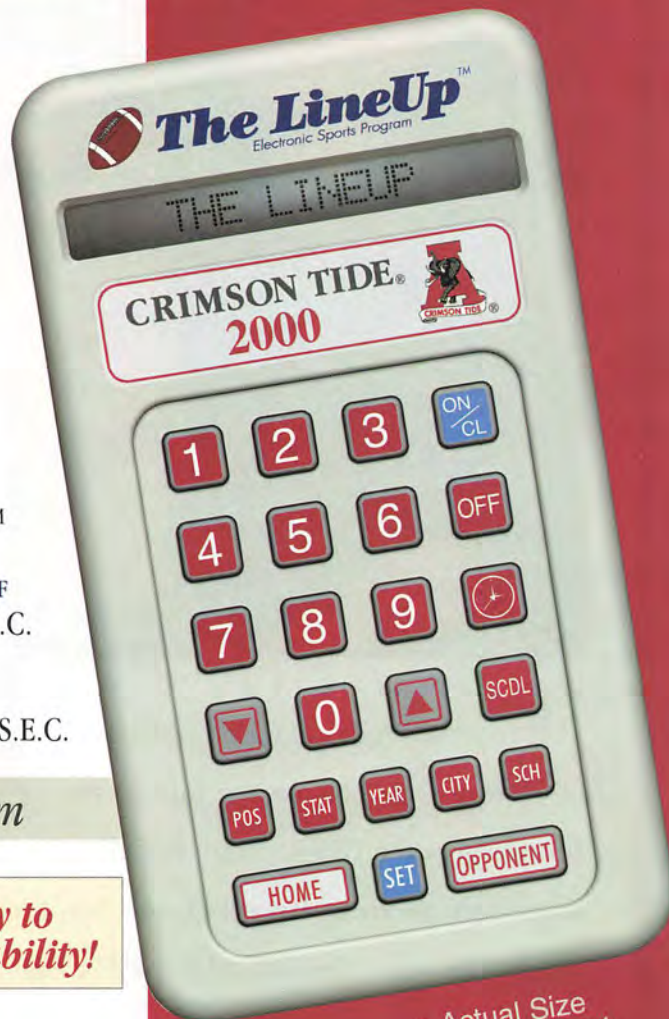
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